GATCHAMAN

by

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Based on the Tatsunoko Anime Series

TABLE READ SCRIPT ONLY - NOT FOR PRODUCTION!!

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First Table Read Draft

FADE IN:

EXT. SNOW-FILLED MOUNTAIN - DAY

Thick snowflakes fly through the air. Calm and serene. WHOOSH! - A BLACK SHAPE suddenly crosses the shot, reminiscent of the classic *Gatchaman* frame wipe.

WIDER - It’s an EAGLE. Cam follows its grace, dodging snowfall and lowering to the trees below.

The bird coasts down through the trees, branches whizzing by frame. Finally lands in a tranquil snow-covered area.

A beat, then -

- the bird TAKES OFF as bright arterial RED BLOOD spatters across the ground. A ROBED BODY falls into frame. Cam ANGLES UP, revealing we’re in-

EXT. JAPANESE MOUNTAIN VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

SUPER TITLE - JAPAN, EDO ERA

Total mayhem. A small mountain village is under attack. Villagers run, panicked. Rooftops burn. Graphic presentation.

BLACK CLAD SAMURAI pillage away until a YELL comes from off screen. The Samurai stand at attention.

CLOSE ON VILLAGE TONI GATE - Weathered and worn. A parchment with Kanji scrawled on it hangs on top. Cam BOOMS DOWN, looking at the hill behind it. Snow falls heavy.

ON HILLTOP - Slowly, we see movement. Then shapes. Then we see the first two SAMURAI come through the atmosphere. Then two more, and so on. They are portaging a PALANQUIN, red and regal with spears.

ON PALANQUIN - Carries a BLACK SAMURAI WARLORD. Ominous. Face covered in a ceremonial mask. Behind his chair is a SYMBOL - we’ll come to know as the face of eternal evil. <u>GALACTOR</u>.

ON BRIDGE - The palanquin lowers and the Warlord steps off. Tense. The Samurai push a MALE VILLAGER to the foreground. Another kicks him behind the legs, immediately bringing him to his knees in front of the Warlord.

VILLAGER - tries to remain strong and proud. Nothing back from Warlord. Slowly, the Warlord reaches to a HILT on his belt and pulls out a HUGE SWORD. <u>The sword is strangely anachronistic, a mix of tradition and high tech.</u>

Warlord holds the sword above the man’s head. Man PRAYS IN JAPANESE. A beat. Villager eyes the COLD RIVER below him.

He looks at his wife and children. A beat. The Samurai Sword comes down! The crowd reacts, as he falls into the water below!

UNDER WATER - The Villager looks up, sees the burning village through the cloud of red in front of him. Sees his wife and children screaming and crying. Music builds. Doesn't want to rise from water, but knows he'll die if he stays under. Then-

VOICE (V.O.)
Rise.

QUICK GRAPHIC SHOTS - bird-shaped screen wipes, village on fire, women screaming, children crying, gasping for air, water bubbling, a WATERFALL, Villager's eyes open revealing FIRE RED pupils. The sequence builds with music to a barrage until -

CUT TO:

INT. MUSCLE CAR - DAY

A YOUNG MAN, JOE CICERO, late-teens/early 20's, slams awake from a DREAM. Stress shown only by a bead of sweat. Not the first time he's had this dream.

SUPER TITLE: UTOLAND, PRESENT DAY...

Joe is as good-looking as he is confident. Has an intensity about him that disarms most people he meets.

EXT. FEDERAL TECH RESERVE HIGH RISE - CONTINUOUS

He sits behind the wheel of a souped up classic muscle-car.

REAR VIEW MIRROR - Composed. Puts on sunglasses. Silence is broken by a CELL PHONE CHIRP.

JOE
Yeah.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Are you ready?

JOE
That's what you're payin' me for.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
We're on our way.

ANGLE FROM TOP OF BUILDING - Cam booms down from the impossibly high tower. Busy crowds. Ornate courtyard.

LOWER - A slight breeze billows open one of the men’s coats, revealing the top of a HEAVY ARMORED VEST.

LOWEST - Cam finishes lowering, landing outside of Joe’s side window, frame men behind it. Joe stare ahead. Intense. Ready for action. Men get in back seat.

MALE VOICE
Drive.

WIDER ON BUILDING - BOOOOM! Glass is blown out of the first two floors as mass chaos fills the street. Joe peels out and down the street like a rocket.

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Joe’s car skids around the corner. He’s calm as the two Terrorists look out the rear window nervously. All is clear.

TERRORIST 2
Heh-heh... I knew we’d make it.
(looks at briefcase)
We shall be heroes.

Joe studies a digital map on his PDA. Frowns.

JOE
Cork the champagne, pops.

Suddenly TEN POLICE CRUISERS slide in behind in high pursuit!

JOE
Buckle up.

A HIGH SPEED CHASE rockets through the busy city streets, with Joe narrowly avoiding capture at every turn.

The cam shoots from every possible angle - through the dash instruments, up from the floorboards, from Joe’s lighting-fast reflexive eyes in this adrenaline-filled sequence.

Joe manages to avoid pedestrians and causing any severe physical harm. He has devices that control traffic lights as well on the fly. The men in the back fear for their lives until a flying car-roll over a police barricade clears them to safety.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - SUNSET

Quiet and deserted industrial section on the outskirts of town. Silence is broken as Joe’s car rumbles down a narrow alley. Pulls into an abandoned warehouse #T72.

INT. WAREHOUSE #T-72 - CONTINUOUS

The floor is wide open and bare. Torn plastic sheets sway in the passing breeze inside. Pigeons coo from the rafters as Joe’s car pulls into the middle of the space.

He shuts off the car. Not speaking to the Terrorists.

TERRORIST 1
(looking around)
Waitasec, kid. Whass this crap?!

CLICK - The sound of doors LOCKING. Terrorist 2 tries to open to no avail. Joe doesn’t turn around.

TERRORIST 1
This ain’t what we’re payin’ you for!
(starts to lose cool)
THIS AIN’T WHERE WE’RE SUPPOSE TA BE!

Joe turns. LARGE REVOLVER trained between Terrorist 1’s eyes.

JOE
(cold)
Actually... it is.

Terrorist stares down the barrel. Scared. Then DEFIANT.

TERRORIST 1
Hail Galactor.

JOE
Not today.

WIDER OUTSIDE OF CAR - BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! - Four flashes explode out of the car windows. Then... silence.

INSIDE OF CAR - We watch Joe through his rearview mirror. The red carnage in the backseat is very out-of-focus... and that’s probably a good thing.

Joe takes out a HANDHELD PDA. Inserts a memory stick that brings up a list of SURVEILLANCE HEADSHOTS on the screen. Most are CROSSED OFF. He reaches two that aren’t... and then strikes them out.

Takes out the $50,000 fee from the Terrorists and tosses it in the backseat.

WIDER - Joe walks away. His bag of worldly possessions slung over his shoulder. From his pocket he pulls out what appears to be a ZIPPO FLIP-TOP LIGHTER.

CAM BOOMS DOWN - to a close up of Joe as he opens the lighter. Only there is a BUTTON instead of a roll-flint. He presses it as -

-KA-FWOOOOM! - the car blows up behind him! His face is still emotionless as he walks offscreen and into the evening.

DR. NAMBU (O.S.)
This great city is based on a premise of hope. A premise that our past is NOT prologue. A premise that proves a history of violence, hatred and fear can in fact be well behind us.

CUT TO:

EXT. UTOLAND - DAY

A beautiful sun-filled day. We meet UTOLAND for the first time. Prosperous and happy people fill the streets, made up of a multitude of nationalities. A city in mid-reconstruction. Think Hong Kong in about 50 years.

Multi-layered L-streets carry cars on all heights. The city is being rebuilt in concentric circles from the center of the city. As we move closer to the center, the buildings become taller, newer.

Cam rises up from the older sections, past the L-streets, and cresting the tops of the buildings revealing the collection of massive glass high-tech structures in the center, namely-

EXT. UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS - UTOLAND - DAY

A gleaming tower of hope. The perfect government building that is just the right mix of glitz and functionality.

DR. NAMBU (O.S.)
And when it is finished, Utoland will not just be an experimental prototype city, my fellow delegates. But a promise to not forget our past, as we put our national differences aside and boldly move forward into the future. Together.
(applause)
It will be a global community made real.

INT. UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS HALLWAYS - CONTINUOUS

The interior hallways are just as impressive. Most barrenly, a few well-groomed U.N. delegates rushing into the main UN council room. A few small office bots skitter around the hallway.

A silhouetted MAN in a cloak and cane walks down the hall.

INT. UNITED NATIONS MAIN COUNCIL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hundreds of well-dressed delegates sit row upon row listening to the speaker. The walls are ornate, and its embossed and engraved decor speaks to man’s strength, courage and power.

DR. NAMBU (O.S.)
My duties are not only to help shape this future, but also ensure it’s security. We must not ignore the state of unrest that exists in countries within our union.

U.N. CROWD
(disapproving mutter)

ON STAGE - We finally see the speaker. DOCTOR ANDERSON NAMBU - mid-40’s Africa-American. Intelligent and carefully spoken.

DR. NAMBU
Yes, I speak of the nation of Slovizska and “President” Yuri Zarosta.
(more room mutter)
I put to you that their civil unrest will only serve to further divide our fledging organization.

ON PROJECTOR SCREEN - A video of PRESIDENT YURI ZAROSTA at a military rally/parade - a well-decorated sack of sweaty fat with a barrel chest that once belonged to a great soldier.

U.N. MEMBER 1
WHO ARE WE TO DENY GLOBAL AID?!

U.N. MEMBER 2
THEY NEED TO BE STOPPED!

The room erupts in commotion. Slovizska’s unrest is a source of much tension.

U.N. MEMBER 1
It is so simple for you to pass judgement high atop your throne of prosperity!

ON DARK CORNER - The CLOAKED MAN from the hallway. A shadow falls across his face. His skin is pale and his lips just a shade too red. He SMILES... just a little too wide.

Nambu tries to control the crowd.

DR. NAMBU
That is why I am proposing higher security measures for our city! We cannot idly sit by and wait for this tiny nation to divide an entire world government! Incidents such as last week’s subversive bombing must be prevented!

U.N. MEMBER 1
We need to send aid! Not more ammunition! Their civil war grows more out of control by the day!

U.N. MEMBER 3
Why should we be prisoners in UTOLAND - our great city of “hope and freedom?!”

The room erupts again.

DR. NAMBU
(fighting growing chaos)
Gentlemen! Ladies! Please!
(beat - then louder)
PLEASE!!

ON ROOM - It silences. All eyes on Nambu. He waits a beat. Contemplative. He looks down at his podium.

ON PODIUM - There is a DOSSIER with a small INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE ORGANIZATION emblem. “Confidential” is splayed across, just above a curious red symbol... the symbol of GALACTOR. Nambu sighs to himself.

DR. NAMBU
(hesitant, then-)
You know me as a man of science. A man of reason.
(beat)
So you must trust me when I tell you that this threat is bigger than the mere civil unrest of a small European nation. From my extensive work within the International Science Organization I can tell you...
(beat - all eyes on him)
... Zarosta is merely a puppet running his regime.
(MORE)

DR. NAMBU(cont'd)
He is secretly being controlled by the terrorist organization known as GALACTOR.

WIDER - The floor goes nuts. Some laughing, others screaming.

U.N. MEMBER 2
“Galactor” is nothing more than urban legend!

U.N. MEMBER 1
An organization that-

DR. NAMBU
Yes, an organization that has been behind every war and major disaster for centuries!

U.N. MEMBER 3
(sarcastic)
Should we perhaps fight them with the fabled MASONS? Or perhaps with another Illuminati?

The room’s roar grows louder. No one is listening... except for the Cloaked Man.

Nambu shakes a fistful of papers and research as he yells.

DR. NAMBU
SLOVIZSKA HAS BEEN INFILTRATED BY THIS ORGANIZATION! THEIR GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMY HAVE BEEN USURPED AND ARE POSITIONING THEMSELVES FOR A LARGE SCALE ATTACK! WE WILL BE HELPLESS UNLESS WE ACT NOW!
(louder)
BUT I HAVE A SOLUTION!

The roaring has won over Nambu’s shouting. The U.N. delegates have seceded into their own inter-bickering.

CLOSE ON NAMBU - He knows he’s lost again. He looks out at the crowd, as Cloaked Man walks out of the room.

DR. NAMBU
(quiet, defeated)
...I have a solution.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON - A PATCH - a wire-frame globe... the crest of the INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ORGANIZATION.

COMMANDER(O.S.)
All units. We need to do a sweep and clean of the last three buildings. Over.

The logo moves away from cam, revealing that it’s a patch on the sleeve of a Red Impulse COMMANDER. <u>These guys are good.</u>

EXT. WAR-TORN WORLD WAR II ERA CITY - NIGHT

Shot documentary-style, the Commander steps back to address his EIGHT RED IMPULSE SOLDIERS. They hide behind a blown-out wall of rubble. Commander uses military hand signals.

COMMANDER
Alpha Team, you head north. Omega, grab the west. Theta, you’re with m-

-KAPOW! - He’s suddenly drilled off his feet at the sound of a rifle shot!

ALPHA SOLDIER
GO! GO! GO! GO!

They scramble in different directions, splitting up into THREE SUB-TEAMS - ALPHA, OMEGA, THETA.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

The three-man ALPHA TEAM moves briskly and with precision along a bombed alleyway, guns drawn.

Point Man barely notices his two partners get yanked into the darkness surrounding him. He whips around - they’re gone.

ALPHA SOLDIER
Jackson! JACKSON! O’LEARY?!

POV FROM DOWN THE ALLEYWAY - The cam is MOVING, almost like the POV of an ANIMAL. The Soldier doesn’t notice. The POV cam briefly runs along the side of the wall. The Soldier turns!

ALPHA SOLDIER
AAAIIIIIEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!!!

WIDER - We see the fallen soldier. Motionless. There is a BLACK FIGURE hunched over top of it. Wiry. Thin. Animalistic in its demeanor. As cam pushes in, suddenly -

- WHAM! - the shape’s head SNAPS to look at cam. ELECTRIC RED EYES glare out of its face. It suddenly LEAPS out of frame!

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Omega Team climbs the stairs of a multi-story residential building. Laser sights criss-cross as they sweep.

Omega Leader throws up a fist to stop the team. Points.

OFF POINT - we see MULTIPLE WIRES running from various holes in the floor to holes in the ceiling. Omega continues to sweep the perimeter of the floor, not seeing -

- behind them as a DARK SHAPE slowly rises up on one of the wires! Multiple shapes pop up. They fire in all directions.

OMEGA SOLDIER
EIGHT O'CLOCK! EIGHT O'CLOCK!
(then)
THREE O'CLOCK! YOUR THREE!
(firing in all directions)
DAMMIT!!!

Their guns finish with a silent whir - depleted of ammunition. They re-clip and approach the decimated objects.

CLOSER - we see FLUFF dancing in the air. The objects were just ADORABLE STUFFED ANIMALS... now torn to hell.

OMEGA SOLDIER
...I hate them.

BEHIND SOLDIER - They're blind to another similarly-shaped object rising out of the floor. Until -

- WHAM! - the "object" snaps to an unfolded position, LEGS AND ARMS extended, holding a large GUN in each hand!

OMEGA SOLDIER
FIRE AT WILL!

The Shape uses the wires to contort and twist to avoid getting shot like an armored version of Cirque du Soleil!

The smoke clears, all three soldiers lay on the floor.

CAM ADJUSTS to the Shape now hanging upside down, guns smoking... as it slowly rises up and out of the room.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

THETA TEAM, now two, are wildly firing directly at camera. Thousands of rounds a second.

ON OTHER END - Two Shapes, one large and carrying two GATTLING GUNS fires as the other Shape charges Theta, bullet tracers zinging past him.

The Shape leaps, dodges, ducks and does anything in its power to avoid getting hit. **Superhuman.**

The Shape leaps up in the air above them, crouching like a tiger in mid-strike and scissor kicks the Theta Soldier, then landing on the Leader’s chest, pinning his weapon arm.

KA-CHIK! - The Shape’s weapon is jammed under the Leader’s chin. Leader’s eyes go wide. The three other Shapes jump in.

SHAPE/KEN
(mechanical voice)
First mistake was splitting up your forces before you knew what you were dealing with...

Tense... until Leader begins to LAUGH.

THETA LEADER
(fighting back laugh)
Unless I was a... distraction.

Suddenly - BOOM! - a full sized I.S.O. MILITARY TANK explodes through the retaining wall behind them! The Shape rolls away, just before getting crushed!

VOICE/STRYKER (O.S.)
Pssst.

Shape whips around to a stare down with a large-calibre GUN MUZZLE. BAM! - It fires, throwing the Shape back a dozen feet, collapsing on the ground!

WIDER - As TEN RED IMPULSE soldiers pop up along the rooftops, weapons trained down on the other three! They OPEN FIRE, drilling the three other shapes to the ground - **DEAD.**

Red Impulse Leader walks up to the fallen Shape on the ground. Leans down, and SIGHS.

STRYKER
“A” for effort, kiddo.

ON LEADER - He is COLONEL JACK STRYKER, mid-40’s, and as square jawed and handsome as you would expect for the position. His face is hardened by the reality of war.

He extends his hand... only to have it SLAPPED AWAY!

ON SHAPE - Alive. He stands up by himself. Hits a wrist button that retracts his high tech helmet/mask revealing -

- KEN WASHINGTON, 19. The leader of GAMMA FORCE... and loser of this round of training. He’s handsome and young, not to mention extremely pissed off.

KEN
Get away from me.

WIDER - All the “dead bodies” stand up. We see small SENSORS on their body, blinking red. Soldier takes one off and we see a small prod recoil back into the sensor. Looks painful.

OMEGA SOLDIER
(groaning in pain)
Remember when we just used lasers and beeps?

ALPHA SOLDIER
(rubbing his pec)
...yep. The good ‘ole days.

ON THREE SHAPES - They also stand and remove their masks revealing they’re ALL JUST TEENAGERS. *With every character, there will be a graphic slideshow - a mini-origin scrapbook as we learn their vital stats*:

- JUN KELLY, 17 - Disarmingly beautiful. Intense eyes.

- RYU NAGANO, 19 - Walking brick-shithouse of a man. The linebacker friend you were glad to have in high school.

- JINPEI, 12 - Scamp, wide-eyed techno-whiz and always looks to be thinking ten steps of everyone else.

A KLAXON suddenly wails.

CAM PULLS BACK AND UP... eventually pulling through glass. We’re looking over NAMBU’S SHOULDER. There are observation monitors in front of him flashing “FAILED”.

DR. NAMBU
...shut it down.

WIDER - We see a glass-walled OBSERVATION ROOM suspended from the ceiling. It moves along tracking on the ceiling, back to a position to lower onto the training ground.

TRAINING OPERATOR (O.S.)
Exercise is over. Stand easy.

KACHUNK! - The room’s overhead LIGHTS come on, changing the night time to blinding fluorescent white.

KEN
This is total crap and you know it!
Intel said that there were only three squads and a tank!
(MORE)

KEN(cont'd)
Using an additional squad outside of the zone is CHEATING.
(gets in Stryker’s face)
We should’ve won!

ON RED IMPULSE SOLDIERS - gathered around the group. They snicker at his temper. One soldier “BROCK” antagonizes.

BROCK
And do y’think intel is always going to be a hundred percent? Well, it ain’t snot-rocket. Not in the REAL world.

JINPEI
Yeah, and in the real world, no one should have hair like that, dork.

JUN
(hushed, semi-scolding)
Jinpei.

The flat-top Brock FUMES. Jinpei’s laugh fades until CAM ADJUSTS to Ryu who discreetly sticks out a fist for a respect knuckle pound and an approving nod. Jinpei grins.

DR. NAMBU (O.S.)
So how did they do?

ON NAMBU - Stepped out of the Observation Tower, now lowered to the ground. Stryker walks to front of group.

STRYKER
As usual, phenomenal agility and precision of attack. Stealth is near perfect.
(looks back at Ken)
But they still lack leadership to pull them together as a team. They act without ration and are too quick to lower their guard.

Nambu’s face says it all. It resonates with Ken.

KEN
But they changed protocol! In a real combat situation, I’d never let that slip!

STRYKER
You got yourself AND your time killed.

Stryker just starts to walk away. As he passes Nambu -

STRYKER
They’re still not ready.

Nambu looks at Gamma Force. Egos bruised. They walk out the hangar doors into the bright daylight.

EXT. I.S.O. HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

They walk down a line flanked by TWENTY RED IMPULSE, all guns drawn escorting Gamma Force to their ride. Above them, two armed copters circle for added security.

KEN
This wasn’t my fault.

JUN
We’ll get ‘em next time, Ken.

RYU
‘member when they used to let us win? Fun times.

JINPEI
Yeah, and when did the Red Impulse guys suddenly have it out for us?
(gets into APC)
It’s starting to suck around here.

WIDER - They get into an APC. Inside, it’s comfy and packed with amenities - games, food, drink, TV. Sit down, bored.

JINPEI
(mouth full of licorice)
Yep... really suck.

APC pulls away. CAM BOOMS UP - Revealing the ISO base. A sprawling campus that sits on the edge of a CLIFF on the outskirts of Utoland.

RED IMPULSE SOLDIER
Pfft... freaks.

CUT TO:

EXT. SLOVIZSKA - DAY

A GRAY city, a mix of East Berlin and Czech Republic. Crumbling history and a strong sense of military...

SUPER TITLE STAMPED IN STEEL: Slovizska

BOARDROOM MAN 1 (O.S.)
Viktor! You must listen to reason!

CAM PUSHES IN - on a fortified museum-turned-outpost.

VIKTOR (O.S.)
We are being positioned as FOOLS! Our “great leader” has let ambition and pride cloud his judgment!

CUT TO:

INT. DARKENED BOARDROOM - CONTINUOUS

CAM PUSHES down the long glass table, low angle. Spread over it is a GLASS MAP with tiny ships, oil refineries, etc.

Men in suits and dark sunken eyes scream at one another. The strong top light casts an eerie shadow on the scene.

ON VIDEO MONITOR - A YOUNG MAN watches on as well. (we’ll meet him later)

BOARDROOM MAN 2
We have all agreed that using Galactor forces as our mercenary army is the wisest move. They are untraceable by the United Nations.

VIKTOR
Exactly! MERCENARIES! They have no loyalty except to those who pay them. OUR PRESIDENT IS A FOOL!

ON DOORWAY - The imposing shape of YURI ZAROSTA - military leader and president of Slovizska. The room shushes.

ZAROSTA
Please, continue, Comrade Tanklevich.

BEHIND ZAROSTA - His “entourage”. Notably, we see the tall Cloaked Man from the UN standing behind him. Vik goes pale.

VIKTOR
All I am saying is that we do not know all we should about Katse and his Galactor Army.
(glares at Cloaked Man)
They could be our ENEMY.

Zarosta is amused. He begins to walk down the table.

ZAROSTA
He-heh. Viktor believes himself to be an expert in military campaigns.
(re: his own medals)
Have you served in dozens of civilian wars?
(gestures to glass eye)
(MORE)

ZAROSTA(cont'd)
Survived eight assassination attempts?
(more enraged)
Watched as your own country is pillaged by foreign governments who tell you that THEY know better than you ABOUT YOUR OWN MOTHER COUNTRY?!

As he walks, the men at the table dare not move. They listen. Quiet. Obedient. The Cloaked Man, we'll call him KATSE from now on, walks alongside with a CANE.

ZAROSTA
Would you care to know what I know about Comrade Katse?

VIKTOR
Sir, I, um-

ZAROSTA
He does exactly as I wish.

Katse suddenly rises from BEHIND Viktor, hovering over him like a vulture. He slams his hands on the sides of Viktor's face! Viktor's eyes go wide. He struggles, but it's useless.

ON TABLE - They cringe, obviously having seen this before.

ON VIKTOR - His eyes begin to bulge. His face sallows and his body twitches as if an electric current is surging through it. Katse remains calm. He LEANS DOWN, an inch from his face.

KATSE
Shh-shh-shhhhhhh...

Viktor takes his final breath. Katse deeply inhales it.

WIDER - Rigor mortis has set in. His eyes now a milky white. Katse hovers over him like a buzzard. His head suddenly SNAPS up, looking at the other men. They all recoil on instinct.

ON KATSE - Obediently retreats behind Zarosta, who is equally as disturbed, yet knows the allegiance it gives him. He surveys the room. Scary. Predatory.

ZAROSTA
Gentlemen. Our future is now. And the time of our global oppressors is over. We are great men, poised to be remembered throughout history for our actions.
(beat - looks at Viktor)
Actions that have already begun.

CAM LOWERS TOP-DOWN ONTO TABLE - Closer. Closer. Suddenly the FREIGHTER SHIP icon X-DISSOLVES to a real one. We're in -

EXT. BALTIC SEA - CONTINUOUS

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
...and as war worsens in Slovizska and its surrounding territories, hundreds of refugee ships have been deployed, hoping to diminish civilian casualties.

CAM WIDENS - One. Seven. Then HUNDREDS of ships as they sail in all directions across the seven seas.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
The good news, is that the world is welcoming them with open arms.

DIP TO BLACK:

QUICK FLASHES OF JAPANESE VILLAGE OPENING - Swords slashing. Screaming. Panicked running in the snow. Louder, the sounds of HORSE GALLOPING through muffled snow. We’re in...

EXT. SNOW-FILLED JAPANESE VILLAGE - DAY

POV SHOT - From inside the water. Picking up where the first dream left off. We can see the murky shapes of those above. The sounds of heartbeat and drowning.

WIDER - A HIDEOUS WATER CREATURE bursts out of the water! It charges straight for KEN. He struggles, but can’t keep the creature away, as suddenly -

KEN
AAAAAAAAAAAGGHHHHH!!!!!!!

INT. KEN’S BARRACKS ROOM - MORNING

Ken sits up, drenched in sweat. He collects himself, slowing down his panicked breathing.

WIDER - His room is very utilitarian. Very little personal effects. One sole athletics trophy on a shelf. Reams of textbooks. One tattered photo of a young Ken with his parents sits framed on his end-table.

He looks to his clock - 2:09 am.

KEN
Great.

CUT TO:

INT. I.S.O. HALLWAYS - MOMENTS LATER

Ken walks barefoot along the empty hallways. Passes a SECURITY GUARD.

KEN
Hey Nick.

SECURITY GUARD
‘nother sleepless night?
(reaches under counter)
Cafeteria’s open m’man.

KEN (O.S.)
Thanks.

INT. I.S.O. CAFETERIA - MOMENTS LATER

Ken walks in the back door. Through the stainless steel kitchen. Opens a fridge and grabs a bottled water and banana.

MAIN ROOM - He opens the door. Quiet and dark. He looks to the right only to see JUN, RYU AND JINPEI already awake. Jinpei and Ryu play head-to-head handheld games, while Jun reads a thick tome. Jin is tucked under Jun’s maternal arm. A devoured plate of cookies and milk on the table. Jun smiles.

JINPEI
Mornin’ cap.

KEN
What’s everyone doing awake?

Ken sits down at the table.

RYU
Jinpei had another nightmare.

JINPEI
Did not.

RYU
Did too.

JINPEI
Shut up. YOU try having a dream about fighting Japanese samurai and losing every time.

JUN
I have the dream too, remember?

RYU
(not looking up from videogame)
(MORE)

RYU(cont'd)
Yeah, after a while, you get used to it, little dude.

ON KEN - Thinks about his upcoming words.

KEN
...I had the dream tonight.

WIDER - They all stop. Look at him in disbelief.

JUN
The village dream? You finally had it?

JINPEI
With the snow falling, and the burning village?

RYU
And kickin’ some black samurai ass?

ON KEN - He’s bothered.

KEN
Um... no. Not exactly.

JUN
What do you mean?

KEN
I mean, mine was just a little... different.

Longest beat. Everyone stares at the table. Then-

RYU
Just to be sure. In your dream, do any of the village women take their robes off?

JUN
Ryu!

RYU
Okay, okay! Wanted to be sure which dream we were talking about. No naked women. Gotcha. Carry on.

JUN
Either way, this is way too weird to just be a coincidence.

KEN
(dismissive)
Jun, it happens. We share the same schedule, eat the same food, take the same tests as each other.

RYU
Here’s a crazy idea... maybe it’s because of all the “vitamins” that Nambu gets pumped into us on a daily basis! Maybe it’s that we’ve all had insane bio-chem experiments done on us in the pursuit of “national freaking security”. All to protect the people from some imaginary villain.

KEN
Galactor IS real, Ryu.

RYU
All’s I’m saying, Kenny, is that we’re Doc’s little science experiment. We work alongside about a hundred and fifty people who all graduated at the top of their class. And even then, half of them probably won’t be able to sustain a career with I.S.O.
(beat)
But WE do. And not only that, but we’re given the best training facilities, the top instructors and every scientific and technological leg up known to man.
(beat)
But we ALL have the same dream? I think there’s something more to the Gamma Project than Doc told us.

KEN
Nambu isn’t lying to us, Ryu. And he’d never put us in harm’s way.

Ryu stares, a beat. He knows his place.

RYU
Aw, I guess.

ON JINPEI - Eyes excited and darting.

JINPEI
So whaddaya you guys want to do next? I can stay up ALL night. Seriously. I can get my multiplayer tap and we can all join in! Whaddaya say?

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. I.S.O. CAFETERIA - HOURS LATER

Jinpei is SNORING, fast asleep in the very chair where he was just talking. WIDER, and we see Jun and Ryu as well. Ken’s seat is empty. Morning sun peers into the windows, and the cafeteria is in full swing.

A Red Impulse soldier - TANKER - kicks open the bathroom door, hitting Jinpei’s chair. Wakes the table up. The stink hits Jinpei first.

TANKER
(waving in front of face)
You do NOT want to go in there!

As he passes by Jinpei, Tanker pulls on the back of his goggles, sling-shotting them off his head.

TANKER
‘Scuse me, scrote.

He leaves. A beat. Jin holds his nose.

JINPEI
We REALLY need a new table, dudes.
(looks around)
...where’s Ken?

INT. I.S.O. HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Ken is in ATHLETIC GEAR, jogs through the ISO grounds. Goes through hallways, training grounds and toward the gymnasium.

CLOSE ON - Ken’s face. Intense. Still bothered. Trying to work it out through training.

QUICK SHOTS - Ken working out. Lifting weights. Punching bag. Martial arts floor routines. Working out on a mook-jung block... ending with him smashing the top off the wood block.

Ken walks out as the splinters fall around him.

CUT TO:

INT. NAMBU’S OFFICE - DAY

Big and important, overlooking Utoland. Glass walls and accents. Glass displays project high-tech info.

ON MONITOR - GENERAL FRANKLIN KENNEDY, late-50’s - hard-nosed and grizzled military man.

KENNEDY
With all due respect, Doctor, I can’t carry the budget for your little pet project any longer.

Nambu rubs his temples.

DR. NAMBU
General Kennedy, we’ve made incredible advances in their training. My team will be ready when they are needed.

KENNEDY
That’s exactly my point. WHEN are they going to be needed?! With the money I spend on this operation, I could easily arm my overseas troops and increase domestic security for the next ten years.

DR. NAMBU
I appreciate that, sir. However this specific threat is much larger.

KENNEDY
Doctor, a foreign civil war does not equate a massive attack on our planet. And you know as well as I that the general populace could never handle a truth like GALACTOR. Do you remember what happened when we declassified Area 51?

DR. NAMBU
(long beat)
I... I know. Please trust me.

KENNEDY
Well, that trust comes with a truckload of zeroes.

VOICE (O.S.)
Gentlemen. I have a possible solution...

ON CORNER OF NAMBU’S OFFICE - crossed legs sit in a corner. We never see his face or body.

VOICE (O.S.)
Perhaps there is a training mission. Something real-world, yet still low-risk that we could send Gamma Force in for a proof test.

KENNEDY
Go on.

VOICE (O.S.)
We have a basic recon mission. A possible high ranking terrorist in the Galactor organization.
(beat)
But there is a good chance that it will require more resources than our typical ISO recon team.
(to Nambu)
Could be a perfect testing grounds for the worth AND ability of Project Gamma Force.

KENNEDY
(thinking)
You have yourself a deal, gentlemen. I look forward to the results.

Kennedy’s monitor irises out. Nambu collapses in his chair.

DR. NAMBU
Thanks Tetsua. I can’t imagine where we’d be without you.

VOICE (O.S.)
Not a problem, old friend...

ANGLE ON - Voice’s face. TATSUA XHANG, late-20’s. The man on the video monitor seen in the Sloviszkan conference room. Something is “off” about his appearance. Clearly up to no good.

VOICE/XHANG
...not a problem.

CUT TO:

INT. GAMMA FORCE TRAINING ROOM - DAY

QUICK FLASHES - The team training with their signature weapons - Jun’s multitude of high tech yo-yo’s, Jinpei cracking tech code, Ryu’s strength, and Ken’s agility and throwing weapons. Acts as a high-style SCENE TRANSITION

CUT TO:

INT. NAMBU’S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The team sit on sofas around a glass coffee table. Studying docs and plans.

JUN
What’s the fatality assessment?

DR. NAMBU
Negligible, really. I’d put it on the same level as an advanced training exercise.
(sits down)
So what do you think?

ON KEN - He smiles. Knows he’s ready. Nambu nods back.

KEN
Two questions... where and who.

DR. NAMBU
The “where” is the Dregs. Dakota Hotel. The who...

ON TABLE - As a surveillance photo of **JOE** is thrown on it.

DR. NAMBU (O.S.)
We need him alive for questioning.
(beat)
And I need you alive even more. We have a lot riding on this.

CUT TO:

INT. I.S.O. HANGAR - NIGHT

QUICK SHOTS - The team gears up. Ryu and Jinpei are giddy with the excitement of their first real mission. Jun is methodical and precise. Like packing for a business seminar.

KEN - alone in the corner. Already packed and loaded. Quiet.

JUN (O.S.)
You’re going to do great.

Ken fights pre-game jitters. Dives for a bucket and THROWS UP. He stands up, embarrassed, wiping his mouth. CAM DOLLIES AROUND TO REVEAL - the huge hangar with THE CHIMERA ship parked and spot-lit in the center. Ken grabs his gear bag and begins to walk toward it.

KEN
GAMMA FORCE... WE ARE A GO!

They enter the ship, Ken last. Before he brings up the rear bay door, he looks up to the surveillance window.

ON WINDOW - Nambu stands behind console. He NODS to Ken. Ken grins, salutes back and enters the ship.

ON OPPOSITE DARK CORNER - Xhang watches from the shadows. As the ship’s engines start, he opens his communication PDA.

PDA VOICE (O.S.)
Yes?

XHANG
Our plan has been set in motion.

Xhang closes the PDA as we -

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DREGS - OUTSKIRTS OF UTOLAND - NIGHT

The packed city is peaceful from a far distance. The Chimera suddenly ROARS past camera!

RYU (O.S.)
YEEEEEHAAAAAAWWWW!!!!

The ship rockets toward the neon-laden landscape, as it dips down, plunging like a roller coaster.

GAMMA FORCE (O.S.)
WHOA!! WATCHIT!!! RYU!!!

INT. CHIMERA SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Ryu pilots the ship with Jun riding shotgun. Ken commands in back, while Jinpei mans the comm station. Digital 3D map.

JINPEI
We can stash the ship in an abandoned warehouse district, ten cliks from the mark.

RYU
Roger that, little dude.

JINPEI
This is gonna be awesome.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. SHIPYARD - NIGHT

Cranes, abandoned warehouses and freighter boxes line the set on the waterfront of Utoland.

JINPEI (O.S.)
AUGH! This SUCKS!

INT. CHIMERA SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Jinpei pouts at the comm station, radios with the field team.

JUN (O.S.)
Jinpei. You know we need you to coordinate. You trained in it.

JINPEI
But I also trained in field ops!

KEN (O.S.)
We need you to stay with the ship and watch our backs. That’s an order, G3.

JINPEI
(defeated)
Yes sir.

Jinpei sticks out his tongue in silence.

KEN (O.S.)
I heard that.

JINPEI
So how are you guys going in?

EXT. DAKOTA HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Busy neon streets, reflected in the wet asphalt. A bamboo construction frame in front of the hotel. Smoke pours out of manholes. The hotel is old - reminiscent of old Hollywood.

KEN (O.S.)
Right through the front door...

INT. DAKOTA LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Ken, Jun and Ryu walk through the revolving door, in combat suits.

JUN
I still think we should have worn civvies.

KEN
You think anyone here even notices?

ON LOBBY - Dingy and dilapidated. Low-lit. Four psuedo-homeless people mingle as our armed heroes strut through.

ON FRONT DESK - CLERK, 30’s, doesn’t look up from his newspaper.

CLERK
Can I help you?

KEN
(keeps on walking)
No.

CLERK
Whatever dude.

JUN
(trying to be nice)
You have a lovely establishment.

Clerk looks back at paper, rolling his eyes. The three enter the elevator.

KEN
Let’s get heavy.

ON SUITS - Their basic suits TRANSMUTE into heavier combat gear. Combat masks crawl across to cover their faces.

The doors close with a BING.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

HIGH ANGLE - Joe sits on his bed. Eating a hot M.R.E. on the bed. Quiet. Looking at a digital photo of his FAMILY. VO of a family playing. Laughter.

ON PDA - Joe’s jaw clenches as he runs through DOZENS of photos of x-ed out Galactor Terrorists. One remains.

Joe’s jaw clenches. Suddenly -

-BEEPBEEPBEEP - Cam pulls back to the Monitor Screen sitting on the TV. Blinking. He picks it up.

JOE
Crap. What’s this?

ON SCREEN - We see a digitized picture of the HALLWAY.

CAM PUSHES THROUGH SCREEN - to see Ken, Jun and Ryu walking down the hallway until we have morphed into-

INT. DAKOTA HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE ON - a small WIRELESS TRIPWIRE DEVICE and CAMERA lodged discreetly on the wall.

Ken leads cautiously. Stops the group. Points at a door.

ON DOOR - Room #2610. Bingo. Ken motions military-style. Jun places explosives on the door. Ken sends she and Ryu down the hallway as flanks. Counts down... three... two... one...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

BOOM! - The door explodes in splinters, revealing Ken standing there, weapon drawn. He walks in... nobody in the room. Searches everywhere. Nothing.

KEN
(into wrist com)
Room is secure. Target’s not here.
G-2, G-4, sweep adjoining rooms.

Ken holsters his weapon. Stands in front of the black window. Lights twinkle outside. He SIGHS. The mission is a bust.

ON REFLECTION IN WINDOW - Ken’s face reflected on the black glass. Suddenly - ANOTHER PAIR OF EYES OPEN OVER HIS REFLECTION.

<u>IT’S JOE OUTSIDE THE WINDOW!</u>

SMASH! - He leaps through the window, tackling Ken to the ground. Ken tries to reach for his weapon, but Joe presses his knee into Ken’s wrist, and knocks the gun loose.

JOE
WHO ARE YOU?!

Ken reaches for another three weapons, Joe knocking each of them away. He belts Ken in the face, knocking his helmet off.

JOE
(off Ken’s face)
You... you’re just a kid!

Hand-to-hand face off. Ken performs a volley of martial arts moves, expertly executed. Joe dodges them like an old boxer. Ken backflips, then charges in anew, throwing roundhouse kicks and hand attacks. Only-

-BAM! Joe cuts through the pizazz with a simple KICK TO THE NUTS. Ken slams to the floor, out cold.

JOE
Nice try, Bruce.

Suddenly a YO-YO zings past Joe’s head. He spins to see Jun flinging her two-fisted yo-yo attack!

JOE
What is this - the sixth grade?!

WHAP!! - Joe catches both yo-yo’s, wraps around his arms and yanks her forward. Face to face. Jun’s eyes go wide.

JOE
Just so ya know. I got problem with hitting a chick.

JUN
(eyes go angry)
Neither do I.

Jun backflips, and drills Joe under his jaw with a kick. She lands and pulls two more yo-yo’s. Starts spinning. Kickass.

JUN
Just come quietly with us, and there won’t be any trouble.

Joe pulls out his revolver. Points it at Jun. She looks to a PHOTO HOLOGRAM on Joe’s night table - family photo. Loses concentration for a second.

JOE
Okay, playtime’s over, sugar.

BABOOOM! - Two huge ARMS slam through the wall and grab Joe! He’s pulled through the dry wall!

RYU
That’s no way to treat a lady.

Ryu and Joe begin a fight that travels through a dozen connecting hotel rooms - boom boom boom - plowing through the walls between each of them.

QUICK SHOT - Jinpei in the ship. Listening in.

JINPEI
Man! That sounds like so much fun!

BACK IN HOTEL - Ryu and Joe end up against the last room’s wall. Joe tries to lift his gun, but Ryu keeps his hand down.

ON FLOOR - Joe suddenly opens automatic fire on the floor around Ryu! Forming a perfect circle around Ryu’s feet.

RYU
What are you doi-

CRASH! - The floor gives out from under Ryu, sending him falling through the floor to the one below. Joe looks down, smiles, and flips up his gun cowboy-style and holsters it. He looks up, his smile fades.

JOE
They don’t quit.

OFF JOE’S LOOK - Ken and Jun run through the smoke and dust, flying through the air and kick him in the chest!

EXT. DAKOTA HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

KERSMASH! - Joe explodes out a window! CAM PULLS OUT WIDER - showing the BAMBOO CONSTRUCTION GRID in front of the building.

Joe begins a battle with Ken and Jun through the structure in all directions. Flipping from bar to bar, the occasional bamboo shoot bending over the busy traffic 20 floors below!

THWIP-IP - Joe’s hands are suddenly TIED to the structure with BOLO CHAINS!

ANGLE ON - JINPEI, hanging upside down, grinning wide.

KEN
G-3! WHAT ARE YOU DOING AWAY FROM YOUR POST!!

JINPEI
HOW COULD I MISS <u>THIS?</u>! WHOO!

Joe breaks his bindings, lunging for Jinpei. Suddenly Ryu tackles Joe into a support beam. TWANG! - it loosens a cable, which loosens another, then another...

WIDER - The entire structure is tipping away from the building! All five adversaries briefly forget the battle to look at their impending doom.

The structure clashes with the neon sign across the street, sending sparks everywhere, and knocking all five of them off!

ON GROUP - They’re falling hundreds of feet. They stabilize during the fall, but there is nothing they can do to stop it.

ON KEN - He sees his team SCREAMING for help. In a split-second he blames himself.

FLASH - Of Ken’s Nightmare. The Monster Within.

QUICK SHOTS IN SPLIT SCREEN - The group. The ground zooming closer. They cringe, determined. The ground.

KEN
BRACE YOURSELVES!

BOOOM! - A large puff of dust and smoke wipes the frame! PEDESTRIANS SCREAM. The smoke dissipates, to slowly reveal-

- ALL FOUR GAMMA FORCE AND JOE, CROUCHED ON THE GROUND, FROZEN IN THEIR LANDING POSITIONS. A long beat.

WIDER - The asphalt around them is spidered and they’re in the middle of a small newly-created CRATER. Ken slowly lifts his head to realize they’re still alive.

KEN
...whoa.

JOE
Whoa.

Ken spins around, socks him across the jaw. Knocked out cold again. A beat as the crowd gathers. Ken is at a loss for words.

KEN
(into wrist comm)
Subject... uh...

JUN
(equally stunned)
...”captured”

KEN
Right... “captured”. Gamma Force returning to base. Mission complete.

Gamma Force looks at one another, BEAMING.

CUT TO:

INT. I.S.O. HEADQUARTERS -- COMMAND POST - CONTINUOUS

The room erupts in CHEER. Lab assistants, General Kennedy, Xhang and Nambu smile equally as large.

KEN (O.S.)
We’re coming home.

ON NAMBU - Something is consuming his mind. His eyes dart. Xhang notices, while the others celebrate in the background.

XHANG
What bothers you, sir?
(beat)
Sir?

DR. NAMBU
(to himself)
...they all survived. ...what are the chances?

XHANG
Chances of what?

DR. NAMBU
I think we just found our fifth Gamma Force member.

Nambu moves to leave. All smiles.

DR. NAMBU
I'll explain later, my friend. We have so much to prepare!

Nambu leaves the room as HAM his assistant, follows. Kennedy walks up beside Xhang.

KENNEDY
There's a fifth?

PUSH IN - On Xhang. Eyes narrow. Slightly evil.

XHANG
...there certainly is.

CUT TO:

INT. I.S.O. MAINFRAME ROOM - LATER

Very high tech. Lights and rows of massive operational cpu's.

CAM STOPS ON - A SHAPE walking down one of the aisles. He stops. Opens up a port that lowers a keyboard.

ON SHAPE - As the light beams out, illuminating his face. It's XHANG, typing furiously. Nervously. Eyes darting.

ON SCREEN - A question holds *"Security Perimeter Override Execute?"* Suddenly -

I.S.O. SECURITY OFFICER (O.S.)
HEY! Who are you?

A flashlight shines down on Xhang.

I.S.O. SECURITY OFFICER
You have clearance to be here?

XHANG
Oh, I, I was just doing a sub-routine program check. All is fine.

Xhang holds up his clearance badge. Officer inspects.

I.S.O. SECURITY OFFICER
Okay. Sorry to startle you sir.

XHANG
Oh, no problem. No problem at all.

ON XHANG’S LAB COAT POCKET - pulls out a small GUN.

ON SCREEN - The message holds *“Override Complete”* as - BANG! - an offscreen gunshot echoes in the room and the Security Officer thuds to the ground.

XHANG
(into a comm device)
We are ready.

CUT TO:

INT. I.S.O. HALLWAYS - MOMENTS LATER

Nambu walks with Ham double-timing to keep up.

DR. NAMBU
We have to find REV-87 machine, and the Calitron and warm up Holodeck 4. We have a lot of tests to run tonight, son.

HAM
(trying to keep up)
S-sir, what are you talking about?

Nambu stops and turns. Dead serious.

DR. NAMBU
The legend is true.
(smiles to himself)
It’s true.

BOOM! - the floor shakes as if a bomb was set off on the other end of the building.

HAM
The hell was that!?

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! - more impact sounds. Growing louder.

DR. NAMBU
Oh no.

Nambu races down hallways, trying to find the source. They round the corner to the MAIN LOBBY.

DR. NAMBU
Dear god.

ON LOBBY - Mass confusion.

- SIX GALACTOR SPEARHEAD APC’S crash through the ceiling! They smash into the ground, like large wedges. Smoldering.

LAB ASSISTANT
They’re attacking the city! I saw it on the news!

BOOM! - another APC falls on the Assistant, crushing him.

ON APC’S - They start to hiss steam. They open like blooming flowers, as HUNDREDS of Galactor Soldiers pour out! They immediately begin firing!

HAM
WHO ARE THESE GUYS!

One of the soldiers LEAPS through the air, propelled 30 feet up and headed right toward Nambu! Just as he’s about to strike - BAM! - a Red Impulse SHOOTS him from behind!

ON DEAD SOLDIER - Galactor symbol on his uniform.

HAM
Galactor!? They’re real?
(to Nambu)
But, what are they doing here?

ON NAMBU - His eyes go wide. Worst fears imagined. He looks up to the sky...

CUT TO:

EXT. I.S.O. HEADQUARTER - CONTINUOUS

The Chimera rockets past camera toward the cliff-side base. Calm and unaware of what is happening.

JUN (O.S.)
I don’t know Ken. There’s just something about him.

INT. CHIMERA SHIP - CONTINUOUS

ON JOE - Bound in high-tech restraints in the corner. Still unconscious.

JUN
Hostile, sure. But is THAT what Galactor looks like to you? In the room, he had this picture that looked like-

KEN
That’s sweet, Jun. But the guy works for Galactor. We have surveillance photos of him with Galactor Terrorists.
(MORE)

KEN(cont'd)
He’s been paid with Galactor blood money... that’s good enough for me.

JINPEI
Good ‘nuff for me too, cap!

KEN
(to Jun, off Jinpei)
See?

RYU
Guys? GUYS?!

The three gather around Ryu, piloting the ship.

KEN
What is it?

RYU
Are there any scheduled training exercises we didn’t know about?

OFF HIS LOOK - On ISO base. Fireballs and small explosions erupt out of the building.

KEN
This isn’t right.

ON JOE - He wakes up. Orients himself. Realizes he’s bound.

JOE
GET ME OUT OF THIS CRAP RIGHT NOW! YOU GOT NO CLUE WHO YOU’RE MESSIN’ WITH PAL.

KEN
Shut it, scumbag.

A signal chirps in the BG. Ken sits down at a comm screen. Jinpei and Jun gather. Joe can see from a distance.

KEN
Doc. What’s going on down there?!

I.S.O. BACKROOM - Nambu is taking cover in a secret room. Debris and tracer bullets ricochet outside the door.

DR. NAMBU
G-1! I need you to take the others and TURN AROUND NOW.

KEN
No way. We’re gearing up now. We’ll be there in two min-

DR. NAMBU
TURN AROUND NOW KEN!
(realizes his snap, calm)
(MORE)

DR. NAMBU(cont'd)
We need to get you away from here. Please, trust me.

ON KEN - Not sure how to take an order NOT to do his job.

DR. NAMBU
Is your prisoner with you?

JUN
Yes.

DR. NAMBU
I want you to release him.

GAMMA FORCE
WHAT?!

Joe surveys, trying to read the room. Slight smirk.

DR. NAMBU
Ken - stand down. He’s not who you think he is.

KEN
No offence, but I don’t believe that.

JOE
You should listen to your doctor...

DR. NAMBU
STAND DOWN! NOW! This is everything I’ve worked for. Everything you’ve trained for. EVERYTHING that this planet needs to survive the future!
(lower)
Your retrieval of Joe and this invasion are not coincidence. We’re under attack... and you’re the prize. Please... believe me.
(beat)
I’m sorry I didn’t tell you more sooner. We thought there was time, but this forces us to act now.
(to group)
You five are the world’s only hope.

ON SCREEN - Commotion grows closer to Nambu. He’s clearly in danger.

ON JOE’S RESTRAINTS - CLICK - Ken releases Joe. Joe slowly stands. Neither wants to let down their guard.

RYU (O.S.)
What’s the plan dudes? I’m picking up monitor radar waves. We’ll be made within two minutes if we don’t hightail it outta here.

Ken is torn. Stay and fight, or leave as ordered.

KEN
We'll sweep in and pick you up, Doc.

DR. NAMBU
NO. My fight is here.

Ken knew the answer already.

DR. NAMBU
(sotto)
Ken, you're all special. That's what brought us together. You don't understand it yet, but you will lead the charge to save all of mankind. I know you've had a rocky start, but...
(beat)
...I believe in you.

Ken is fighting it. Doesn't want to leave.

DR. NAMBU
Enter TN429 into the Chimera's GPS. It will take you to Japan where you'll learn the truth. You'll be trained. You'll be ready.

JOE
Whoa, whoa, whoa. What makes you think I'm going? I have unfinished business to tend to HERE, pops.

DR. NAMBU
(intense... not much time)
Because you're special like the rest of them. Because you're angry. Because you probably notice that when you focus that energy, your body starts behaving in weird ways.
(beat)
Superhuman, even. And you'll find out why.
(to group)
NOW GO!

ON JOE - His face registers it as the truth.

BOOM! - An explosion breaks through the outer perimeter door by Nambu. Nambu gives one last order.

DR. NAMBU
Whatever you do, do not leave Japan until your training is complete. Do I make myself clear?

KEN
(emotional)
...yes ...sir.

ON MONITOR - Galactor guards charge into the room and run to Nambu. He turns with a gun and shoots three of them, but he can’t stop them all.

STATIC - fills the screen. The feed is dead. Maybe Nambu too.

JUN
NO!

ON KEN - He’s itching to go in. Fighting back screams and tears.

RYU
Whadda we do cap?

Everyone watches Ken, waiting for a command. He suddenly stops. Closes his eyes.

KEN
(sotto)
Follow coordinate TN429 in the GPS.

ON KEN - a small tear escapes his eye and rolls down his cheek. His breathing slows. He looks out the window. The others gather around.

OFF KEN’S LOOK - Utoland is under attack. Plumes of fire and thick smoke pour out of the city. We see the reflection of Ken in the window. He closes his eyes again. Ashamed.

RED IMPULSE SOLDIER (O.S.)
GO! GO! GO! GO!

INT. I.S.O. ARMORY - MOMENTS LATER

Red Impulse Soldiers charge the armory at a corridor’s dead end. Their weapons trapped behind a thick steel door. Soldier hits a code key... nothing.

SECURITY DOOR
Access denied. Perimeter lockdown.

RED IMPULSE SOLDIER
WHAT?!
(presses more buttons)
COME ON!!!

O’LEARY
WHY WON’T IT WORK?!

RED IMPULSE SOLDIER
SOMEONE’S JAMMED THE CODE!

Sounds of footsteps behind them. Red Impulse turn. Oh no.

ON CORRIDOR ENTRANCE - Fifty Galactor lift their weapons on the unarmed Red Impulse... and OPEN FIRE. The final fired bullet flies toward screen, splitting it in half, revealing -

MANY SHOTS - Red Impulse being mowed down by Galactor. Destruction. Chaos. All in slow-mo.

GALACTOR SOLDIER (O.S.)
The base is now secure, Commander. Occupation has been achieved.

CUT TO:

INT. I.S.O. HALLWAYS - CONTINUOUS

The chaos has subsided. Most Red Impulse have either escaped or perished. Destruction everywhere.

A large military procession heads down the hall, led by ZAROSTA. Katse follows behind, with a full armed guard behind them. Zarosta smiles like a Cheshire cat, as his soldiers stop and snap to attention as he passes.

INT. NAMBU'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The glow of the city ablaze lights up the glass room.

ZAROSTA
This will do.

Katse stops the others at the door. Closes it.

ZAROSTA
Stalin. Lenin. Alexander the Great. Do you know what these men have in common, Katse?
(doesn't wait)
Brilliant minds that were never given the opportunity to fully realize their vision.
(beat)
And yet here I stand. About to address the United Nations of THE WORLD. To show them my might. To show that our country's ideologies and force of will cannot be stopped.

Zarosta looks in a mirror, proudly primping. Katse approaches, turns him around, and begins to adjust his collar and tie.

ZAROSTA
He-heh. And do you know what else bonded those men, my friend?

Katse suddenly JERKS UP on the tie, a little too tight. Zarosta's eyes go wide.

KATSE
They were all as weak and stupid as YOU.

Zarosta is confused as suddenly - WHAM! - Katse jams his hands on either side of his fat face. Pushing his cheeks in, as Zarosta's eyes go wider. Flailing like a stuck pig, Zarosta is helpless against Katse's iron grip.

KATSE
Every one of them believed they had it all. Believed that they were untouchable. But they DID have one thing in common...

Zarosta falls to his knees. Death rattle. Squeezes out his last exhale. Katse BREATHES it in like a drug hit.

KATSE
...ME.

WHUMP - Zarosta falls on the floor. Katse brushes off his hands. Saunters over to the window. His silhouette is scary.

KATSE
Xhang, be a dear and take out the trash for me.

ON CEILING - As slowly, a creepy SILHOUETTE lowers into frame. Like a bird-helmeted Gatchaman on acid. Lands without a sound. Looks at Katse. He puts a cowl over his head, transforming himself into something creepy and surreal. He tends to Zarosta's corpse.

KATSE
I don't know what I admire most about the human race, Xhang... their pluck? The will to fight until their ultimate demise?

ON COMPUTER SCREEN - He touches through a series of menus.

KATSE
Their ingenuity?

He pours himself a glass of vintage port. Swirls it and takes a sip. In the BG, the computer begins to play <u>Ravel's BOLERO</u>.

Katse closes his eyes. Savors it like sex. Looks out the window at the carnage he's started.

KATSE
I’d have to say it’s the music.

ANGLE ON CITY - a fleet of Galactor ships fly in overhead.

KATSE (O.S.)
It has begun.

BOLERO swells in the bg as we go:

EXT. UTOLAND INVASION - NIGHT

The classical soundtrack acts as a serene counter-balance to the visual of the start of Galactor’s invasion of Utoland. Citizens are terrorized. Explosions. Blockades. Troops marching down the street. Quarantines.

CUT TO:

INT. CHIMERA SHIP - NIGHT

The ship is quiet. Ryu pilots. Jun tries to sleep. Jinpei watches the news events as they unfold on a monitor.

Jinpei, distraught, turns off the monitor. Walks to Jun.

JINPEI
(whisper)
Jun?
(beat, then louder)
Junie?
(lifts up her eyelid)
JUUUUUN?

JUN
(waking up)
hmm... what is it sweetie?

JINPEI
Utoland’s under attack. Galactor’s taking it over.
(beat - stares)
What’s going to happen to us?

Jun cradles an arm around him.

JUN
It’ll be all right.
(turns to Ken)
Won’t it Ken?

ON KEN - Spinning a holograph of the world globe. Deep in thought. Doesn’t respond. Then-

JOE (O.S.)
Not unless the guy we’re meeting has a buttloada plasmanukes.

ON JOE - Kicked back in his seat. Plays with a knife.

JOE
Trust me darlin’, that little fireworks show back there was just the tip of the iceberg.

KEN
Why should we trust YOU? We don’t even know who you are.
(under his breath)
Galactor scum.

Joe violently suddenly stands up, knocking over equipment.

JOE
LET’S GET ONE THING STRAIGHT, PAL.
(walks over to Ken)
I ain’t no Galactor.

JUN
GUYS! Calm down!

RYU (O.S.)
I’M NOT AFRAID TO TURN THIS SHIP AROUND YOU TWO!

Ken stands up to face Joe. Fists clenched.

JUN
Ken, Nambu obviously thinks Joe belongs here. Just like he hand picked each of us.
(beat)
Has to count for something. Right?

Ken and Joe continue to stand off. Joe smirks, fakes a kiss.

JINPEI
I think the problem is that none of us have been introduced.
(jumps out of his chair)
I’m Jinpei. Super hacker.
(gestures to Jun)
Jun found me when I was just five years old, and I’ve been with these guys ever since.

Jinpei whips out two PORTABLE KEYBOARDS from his belt. They flip open, and he’s typing in a flash.

ON MONITOR BY JOE - A graphic pops up with a caricature of Joe with anime girls. The text “WELCOME JOE” dances overhead.

ANIME GIRLS GRAPHIC
You so supa coooooo!

Jinpei walks over to Ryu still flying. Leans on his shoulder.

JINPEI
This here is my main man Ryu. Say “Whassup” Ryu.

RYU
(hang-10 hand wiggle)
Whassup Mr. Joe?

JINPEI
Ryu can bench press five bills and pack away six liters of soda and two fully loaded gut-buster pizzas in one sitting.
(pats him on the back)
Taught him everything I know.

Jinpei burps “shave and a haircut”... as Ryu burps the final “two bits” notes.

JINPEI
Sweet.
(walks to Jun)
This is Jun. She’s the nicest person I’ve ever met. She likes to blow stuff up too... so that probably makes her good marriage material.

Jinpei walks to Ken, massages his shoulders while he speaks.

JINPEI
And this pile of handsome, charm and skill is Ken. Top gun and very first trainee into the Gamma program. Been training since he was in diapers.
(grabs Ken’s cheeks)
And one day, one day I’ll be as cool as this dude.

ON JINPEI - He walks toward Joe. Building speech. Triumphant.

JINPEI
We were all recruited into a top secret organization. We trained our bodies and our minds to become supersoldiers. Our mission? To lead the charge to protect our world against evil.
(beat)
We are... GAMMA FORCE!

Jinpei raises his fist triumphantly in the air, head back, basking in the glory. Music fades. Then...

JOE
So...
(looks at Ken)
...the leader...
(points at Ryu)
...the fat one...

RYU (O.S.)
IT'S MUSCLE!

JOE
(to Jinpei)
...the whiz kid...
(to Jun)
...and... the girl.
(thinks)
What does that make me? "The angry one"?
(leans back to sleep)
Wake me when we're there, Superfriends.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Galactor Troops stand guard outside of the United Nations. A cloud layer now hangs over the city.

U.N. MEMBER 1
THIS IS AN OUTRAGE!

INT. UNITED NATIONS MAIN COUNCIL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is full. The members look haggard and tired. Unshaven and with wrinkled clothes. Armed forces are all around them.

U.N. MEMBER 2
We have the right to face our captors! It's in the Geneva Amendments!

The room rumbles in agreement. A Member stands up.

U.N. MEMBER 1
THAT'S IT! WE'RE LEAVING AND THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN D-

CRACK - A rifle butt smashes him across the face. The room silences. Then-

KATSE (O.S.)
HEY U.N.! HOW WE ALL DOING TODAY?!

The members look for the source of the voice over the P.A. system. Still quiet.

KATSE (O.S.)
Is this thing on?! I said HOW ARE WE ALL DOING TODAY!!

Still nothing. Then - BLAM! - one of the soldiers shoots a Council Member.

Slowly, one Member starts clapping. Slow and uncomfortable. Then another joins in for fear of his life. Soon the entire room is enveloped in awkward applause. The shaky voice of a HOSTAGE ANNOUNCER comes on, sounds like he has a gun trained on his forehead.

HOSTAGE ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
(aside to someone else)
...oh god, please don't kill me...
(into microphone louder)
N-n-now here he is. The myth. The legend. Your new ruler and, uh... mine... KATSE?

ON STAGE - From the wings walks the large silhouette of Katse. Hands in the air, triumphant. Dressed in full Galactor regalia. The applause dies down as he takes to the podium.

KATSE
Now THAT'S how to make a tyrant feel right at home!
(beat)
Now, as you may be able to tell, I like to keep things short and sweet. So... the short of it is that life in this oasis as you know it is OVER.

U.N. MEMBER 3
You'll never get away with it - the people of the world won't let us perish like this!

KATSE
GOOD. POINT. Well, that is until you consider <u>this</u>.

Katse twirls up his cane as the top springs off. He pushes a BUTTON on it. Then looks at the silent crowd.

KATSE
(beaming)
How cool was THAT? Huh?!

...only nothing happens. Silence. A long beat. Then-

KATSE
Oh! I’m sorry.
(to a/v workers)
Can we please have some video feed?
Doesn’t matter was station, I’m
sure...

WIDER - As the large monitor on stage as well as the individual desk screens come to life. All stations are carrying the same story, already in progress.

NEWSCASTER
...we can only describe it as something out of science fiction. The large refugee ships sent around the world from Sloviszka have somehow-

Blurred steadicam images showing ships in the sea moving and somehow GROWING larger.

NEWSCASTER 2
Transforming carrier ships have now become walking monoliths in the very harbors they were docked.

NEWSCASTER 3
...with similar stories flooding in from around the globe.

ON TV’S - Sloviszka’s refugee ships have transformed into GIANT WALKING MECHAS, towering at least a half mile above the land. Scary. Panic fills the streets worldwide.

KATSE
(directly at cam)
And if any of your so-called
“allies” around the world should
try to mobilize troops or send
military aid...

TV’S AROUND THE WORLD - Katse being broadcast the world over.

KATSE
Well, trust me, you don’t want to
know what these machines are
capable of.

CLOSE ON - Katse’s face as his sneer grows. Throws his hands in the air, triumphant. Four people awkwardly clap until we-

CUT TO:

EXT. JAPANESE MOUNTAINS - DAY

CAM TRAVELS over top of lush green mountains of Japan.

SUPER TITLE: SHIRAKAMI MOUNTAIN RANGE, JAPAN

The Chimera roars into shot and off into the distance.

KEN (O.S.)
You sure this is the right place?

RYU (O.S.)
The ship’s nav system is still pointing in this direction.

EXT. GREEN MOUNTAIN VALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

A peaceful valley with a river running the base. Heaven.

Chimera flies along it until it hits a dead end - a WATERFALL flying off the top of a tall cliff. The ship hovers in the bay in front of the falling stream.

JINPEI (O.S.)
You might want to check the warranty on that doohickey...

INT. CHIMERA SHIP - CONTINUOUS

The five look out the front screen.

KEN
Set her down over there. We’ll travel by foot.

RYU
Ten-four, boss.

EXT. EMBANKMENT NEXT TO WATERFALL - MOMENTS LATER

The bay doors of the Chimera hiss OPEN. Everyone stands in full gear, except Joe.

JUN
Are you sure you don’t need any combat gear?

Joe twirls up his gun.

JOE
Don’t need more than this.

JINPEI
(impressed in awe)
... coooool.

Ken notices Jinpei’s reaction - normally reserved for him.

KEN
(quietly mocking Joe)
Don’t need more than this...
(overly tough)
Everyone, stay on my tail. Full tactical alert. We don’t know what we’re walking into here. Clear?

Ken looks at Joe who gives a fake salute.

KEN
On my six. Now.

Ken locks and loads and leads everyone out of the Chimera.

EXT. BASE OF WATERFALL - MOMENTS LATER

They climb the slight hill to the base of the waterfall. The fall has a 100-meter footprint. Large and impressive. Ryu carries a handheld GPS system. <u>Lots of HANDHELD POV shots... as if they’re being watched.</u>

RYU
Says this is it.
(looks around)
Apparently we learn the answers to life’s question from fish.

Ken grabs the GPS. Shakes it.

KEN
Doesn’t make any sense.

Jun looks around the area. Studies the waterfall. She closes her eyes. QUICK FLASH of the waterfall, but from her DREAM intersperses itself with what we see.

She looks up - A BIRD CIRCLES OVERHEAD.

Without hesitation, she takes a curious step toward the waterfall. Then SHE STEPS THROUGH IT!

KEN
Jun? Jun!

EXT. CAVERN BEHIND WATERFALL - CONTINUOUS

All five slowly walk under the fall to the dark cavern. Dripping wet on the other side. They adjust their eyes.

Ryu reaches into his camo pants and brings out a LIGHT STICK. He cracks it and holds it up. Their faces fall.

RYU
Hel-lo?

OFF THEIR LOOKS - They stand at the top side of a CLIFF. Japanese kanji engraved into the stone walls around them. Creep forward to the edge. They look down to see-

INT. HIDDEN VILLAGE OF GATCHAMAN - CONTINUOUS

An entire small village embedded into the walls of a vast CAVERN. Roughly two stadiums wide and three stadiums high.

Dozens of buildings are either carved into or retrofitted into the stone walls. A large BUDDHA STATUE is the centerpiece against the back wall, worn from history.

A few scattered waterfalls pour from the walls. Small shafts of daylight shoot in from cracks in the cavern’s ceiling.

<u>It is absolutely beautiful.</u> Then-

POV FROM SHADOWS - Something is watching them.

ON KEN - He can almost SENSE IT. Instinctively -

KEN
Joe, fall in behind.

JOE
Bite me.

KEN
Do it. NOW.

Instinctively, the others fall into perfect defensive formation.

JINPEI
When did we learn this formation?

JUN
I... don’t... know.

WIDER - A DOZEN NINJA emerge from the shadows. They close around the group.

JOE
Oh, what is this?

JINPEI
Under better circumstances, I’d think this is really freakin’ cool.

The ninja lunge forward ATTACKING! The team fights back, and fights well. The two sides are evenly matched.

RYU
Tell me again, how this is better than staying in Utoland?!

The team finds themselves watching each other’s back, but not on purpose - driven instead by instinct. The mini-battle ends with all involved holding killing-poses with their weapons in a melee as-

TAKESHI (O.S.)
(subtitled from Japanese)
STOP!

The entire group freezes, weapons ready to kill. The ninjas fall into formation as a MAN emerges from the shadows.

ON MAN - He is Takeshi. Tall. Bald. Badass. He carries no weapon... he doesn’t need one. He surveys for a beat.

Takeshi sees the I.S.O. logo on Ken’s shoulder.

TAKESHI
What brings the I.S.O. to my house unannounced?

The group doesn’t know what to say. Then-

KEN
Doctor Anderson Nambu has sent us.

ON Takeshi - This obviously means something to him...

CUT TO:

EXT. HIDDEN VILLAGE OF GATCHAMAN - LATER

Quiet and serene. People mill about.

ANGLE ON a long flight of carved stairs, leading to a SMALL TEMPLE high above the rest of the village.

KEN (O.S.)
...and before we knew it, our base was under attack from Galactor.

INT. GATCHAMAN TEMPLE - CONTINUOUS

The room is candle-lit. Kanji scrawled on the walls and an intricate pattern on the floor.

On the back wall is a large symbol - a graphic profile of a PHOENIX hangs on the back wall. The symbol we'll come to know as that of **GATCHAMAN**.

KATSE
If Nambu-san has sent you so soon, then the situation must be dire.
(looks at them)
You are but children.

JOE
Screw you. I ain't with these guys.

Large tapestries hand on the wall. Kinetic and fierce battles. Avian figures shown swooping over head, fight enemies, rising from flames, etc...

JINPEI
(whisper to Ryu)
Wow. They sure have a thing for birds, don't they?

RYU
(whisper back)
Me too... mainly the wings with ranch dressing. Heh.

Takeshi kneels in front of the group. Flanked by his ninjas. He's all business. Thinking to himself.

TAKESHI
Yes... yes...
(to group, conclusive)
You will train and prepare to face your greatest fears and most worthy adversaries. When you have finished, you will be five acting as one, as the legend foreshadows. You will become... GATCHAMAN.

KEN
No offense, sir. But we've spent our whole life in training. We're supersoldiers who need to go do our job. Now can you help us or not?

JUN
(hushing him)
Ken. Please. We promised Nambu.

TAKESHI
Please. Sit...
(amused)
...super-soldiers.

One by one, they all kneel. Ken does so at Jun's dirty look. Takeshi looks to Joe, still standing.

JOE
I’m fine standin’.

TAKESHI
I am certain you are.
(to others)
You no doubt have a vision in your sleep. A recurring nightmare, tinged in scarlet, showing the slaughter of a Japanese Village.

Ken is caught off guard. Joe maintains false bravado.

JOE
Yeah, so?

Ken and Joe both look at each other. Huh?

TAKESHI
And sometimes, a man needs to look beyond a mirror to see himself.
(looks to Jinpei)
Whether he is searching for his past...
(looks to Ryu)
...or trying to forget it.
(looks to Jun)
Whether she is struggling to keep a family together...
(looks to Joe)
...or even trying to find one.
(looks to Ken)
The answers are all there. All you need do is look.

The group is spooked. Takeshi remains cool and continues.

TAKESHI
What you have been experiencing is called the Blood Dream. It is what happens when five must become as one.
(beat)
When it is time... to FIGHT.

The Gatchaman symbol hangs behind Takeshi.

TAKESHI
It is the only way you will learn how to fight this evil.
(cam pushes in tighter)
I am Takeshi. And I will teach you.

ON GAMMA FORCE - They’re very hesitant. Ken most of all.

KEN
But Nambu, our friends, could be captured. Dead, for all we know. Those people need us now.

JOE
(without hesitation)
I’m in.

Everyone turns to Joe, not knowing why he’s so eager to start training.

CAM PULLS OUT OF TEMPLE - Angling on the hundreds of Villagers. All holding CANDLES. Music swells as we -

CUT TO:

EXT. UTOLAND - DAY

Galactor Turrets are erected on destroyed city corners. Troops march down streets. Large IRON CRESTS of the Galactor symbol have been bolted to many buildings.

KATSE (O.S.)
I have to say that I am EXTREMELY disappointed...

INT. UNITED NATIONS MAIN COUNCIL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Katse stands at the main podium. Room is filled with haggard UN council members. He speaks to TV cams broadcasting to the world.

KATSE
I offer to free your world of war, famine and strife... and you repay me with THIS!?

TV MONITOR - Switches to show INTERNATIONAL AIRSTRIKE FORCE headed to Utoland.

KATSE (O.S.)
I try and try, and yet you still insist on defying me. I guess you leave me no choice...

ON KATSE - He pulls out a LARGE GLOBE onto the stage. He spins the globe, hard, and then stands aside. One hand over his eyes, the other pointing a crooked finger at the globe as it spins around.

KATSE
Round and round she goes, where she stops, nobody knows....

ON GLOBE - It’s a blur. It slows down

KATSE
(shivers)
...so... exciting, no?

ON GLOBE - the globe finally slows. Landing on GREENLAND.

KATSE
Well, I was hoping for a little hipper country, but Greenland will have to do.

Katse activates another button on his cane.

ON MONITOR - Cut to the walking mecha in GREENLAND. It mobilizes itself. Stands up straight as it’s multi-layered panelling opens up, shifts and strange protruding gadgets slide out. Looks like a giant sci-fi porcupine. Begins to HUM.

CUT TO GREENLAND - Pedestrians stop and look up. Their faces suddenly illuminated... as they scream.

BACK AT U.N. - Katse stands in front of a large digital map... as Greenland disappears off of it. The room gasps.

KATSE
Now... behave.

CUT TO:

EXT. JAPANESE FOREST - DAY

Sun-beams manage to break through the canopy overhead. Cam cranes down with them. Ends on a 200-foot STONE MONOLITH, erected in the middle of the forest. It has the GATCHAMAN symbol carved into it.

TAKESI (O.S.)
When you have become Gatchaman, you will be able to destroy that rock as if it were rice paper.

ANGLE ON - They turn to face Takeshi and his helper SHIGEO - an 10-year-old stout boy who caddies all of Takeshi’s gear.

TAKESHI (O.S.)
Five acting as one. This is the creed of the Gatchaman Clan. You are stronger as a group than you are in seclusion.
(walks down line)
Some of you are soldiers, trained in modern warfare, intelligence and military weaponry.
(MORE)

TAKESHI(cont'd)
(beat)
While some are cold blooded assassins.

KEN
(whisper)
I wonder who <u>that</u> is.

JOE
(whisper)
Wanna find out, tough guy?

TAKESHI
What you will learn here will make you better fighters. It will teach you to bring out the power within.

RYU
(whispers to Jinpei)
Sounds like an infomercial.

Suddenly - zing! - a Takeshi throwing star nicks the shoulder of Ryu’s uniform, pinning to a tree behind him. Ryu shuts up.

TAKESHI
You will become... ninjas.

KEN
So is this where we act cocky, challenge you, and you kick our asses to show what we can become?

TAKESHI
Of course not!
(looks to forest)
<u>They</u> will.

ON FOREST - As a HUNDRED Villagers dressed in ninja gi’s emerge from the shadows of the forest, weapons drawn.

SPLIT SCREENS - Joe instinctively reaches for his gun - but he’s not wearing it. Ken surveys the surroundings. Jinpei and Ryu stand back to back. CAM SWIRLS AROUND THEM. Shigeo hands Takeshi a bow and arrow.

TAKESHI
<u>Run.</u>

TAIKO DRUMS kick in as they burst into a full-out RUN! They race through the forest, zig-zagging through all the tall trees. As they do, the mob behind them criss-cross as well, diving down from trees, leaping over them, etc.

JUN
WE CAN’T LOSE THEM!

THWIP-IP-IP!! - Arrows stick in trees all around them!

KEN
WE HAVE TO... RUN... FASTER!!

ON JINPEI - He’s squinting as he’s running, pushing as hard as he can. He slowly looks to his left. His eyes are SHOCKED.

JINPEI
You guys? ... YOU GUYS?!

CAM PULLS BACK TO REVEAL - Fired arrows, suspended in air, traveling at the same speed as them!

RYU
BUT... I’M FAT!!

Joe pumps beside Ryu. Cracks a grin.

KEN
It’s all muscle, big boy!

They rocket through the forest, losing their pursuers, but continuing to run. They hit gorges and run along the side of the walls, their speed sticking them to the sides. For the first time, they have FUN as a group. Then suddenly -

ON HORIZON - A cliff is looming. Dangerous gorge ahead.

KEN
We can make it!

RYU
ARE YOU CRAZY?!

JUN
Ken, we’ll never be able to jump that far!

The bickering begins. They lose their footing and WIPE OUT. They tumble for what feels like a half-mile. Joe skids to a long stop. They’ve FAILED.

The group is silent. Ken slams his fist into the ground.

KEN
We shouldn’t even be here.

JUN
Ken, you know this is what Nambu ordered.

KEN
Doesn’t make it right.

Ken walks past Takeshi and Shigeo who have now caught up to the group. Takeshi is concerned, but not worried.

SHIGEO
What if they are too young, Master?

TAKESHI
Time, is a luxury we do not have Shigeo-san...

CUT TO:

INT. NAMBU'S OFFICE - NIGHT

CLASSICAL MUSIC drones in the bg. CAM PANS along a collection of stolen artwork, book tomes, jewelry and a long table holding empty bottles of wine and the carcasses of a fine gourmet dinner. A celebration of mankind.

CAM ENDS ON - Katse looking out the window at the city in turmoil. His arms around the silhouettes of beautiful women.

KATSE
I love this piece, don't you? It's just so... full of life.

ANGLE ON THEIR FRONT - As we see that the women's ashen faces are gaunt and sullen... Katse having drained the life from them. He releases them as they collapse to the floor.

His eyes open. He cracks his neck and stutter-inhales like a crack addict. Then stops like an alert cat. He slowly smiles.

KATSE
Do you have good news for me, Xhang?

XHANG
Their training has begun, my lord.

KATSE
Ohh goodie...

CUT TO:

INT. TAKESHI'S DOJO - LATER

Candle-lit and serene. The five kneel in front of Takeshi.

TAKESHI
In order for you to understand the present and your future, you must know of your past. The past of... the Gatchaman.

CAM RISES from Takeshi, onto the hanging tapestry showing the brushed logo of GATCHAMAN. As we begin the Gatchaman story...

The sequence is presented in japanese brush-painted style. Highly stylistic, symbol-based storytelling highlighting the areas discussed by Takeshi.

TAKESHI (V.O.)
A long time ago, man and nature lived with a strong connection. The Phoenix god, concerned for the well-being of man, created the KARURA as their guardians - birdheaded men who descended from the sky when needed to protect mankind.
(beat)
But as time passed, man grew too dependent on the Karura. Man had to learn to fend for himself. Fearing man was still too young to stand against the shadows alone, a Karura bequeathed its godly powers to five worthy humans. Humans of character, honor and duty. Man had to learn to protect himself.
(beat)
Throughout history, this secret war has raged - five heroes holding back the tides of darkness to keep humanity safe.
(beat)
And now, whenever the Earth falls into peril, the hero’s call is sounded. And like the mighty Phoenix rising from the ashes, five shall rise to meeting the challenge. Those five are... The Gatchaman

When we come out of the story, we find we’re in:

INT. TRAINING DOJO - LATER

Takeshi finishes the story. Walking the five through an exercise.

TAKESHI
And once you harness that power...

WIDER TO REVEAL - The team is blindfolded and walking on the top of a maze of bamboo chutes. They use each other to stay atop the bamboo, relying on one another. They take off their blindfolds, and look down in amazement.

TAKESHI (O.S.)
...your powers will be unstoppable.

JINPEI
(soft)
Whoooooaa.....

TAKESHI
You must learn to trust one another. To live as one. To act as one.

ON TEAM - Ryu starts to shake.

RYU
Dudes. I don’t think this is set to hold my weight.

JOE
Your legs can’t hold your own weight, tubby.

RYU
Oh, why don’t you just g-
(starts to teeter)
..wh-wh-WHOA!

WIDER - A chain reaction as they all fall down in a pile.

TAKESHI
...to fall as one.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON - TELEVISION MONITOR.

Chaos and destruction still continues in Utoland. Small pockets of resistance and gun fire.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)
The occupation of Utoland has grown only stronger over the past two weeks. Once a symbol of hope and prosperity, it is now home to a raging battle of good and evil.

CAM PULLS OUT of TV, revealing we’re now in-

INT. GALACTOR INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Large, dingy metal walls. Faded high tech. A HAND comes into frame, upping the volume on the TV. The warfare continues.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)
While first believed to be started by the nation of Slovizska, it has been since learned that the terrorist organization known as GALACTOR is the true impetus of this invasion.
(beat)
After what has been dubbed “The Greenland Incident”, it seems that no nation is taking any overt military stance at this time.

ON TV - The reporter in a flak jacket standing in front of a battlefield where an army platoon fights on. A graphic of the Galactor symbol hovering over the globe is in the corner.

NEWSCASTER
This is Maria Jimenez-Robinson, reporting live for “Invasion Watch, Two Thousand and-”

POK! - As a bullet rips through her forehead. Feed goes dark. A long beat as Katse stares at the TV. Sniffs. Then-

KATSE
BAH-HAHAHAHHAHHAHA!!

OFF KATSE’S LOOK - DR. NAMBU enters the room, strapped to an insectoid PRISON CHAIR. Spotlight shines down on him.

Katse walks over to Nambu. The chair moves robotically, lifting Nambu upright to face Katse. He’s bruised and a little bloody.

KATSE
It’s so nice to finally meet in person. Your surveillance photos don’t do you justice.

Katse reaches to a tray full of junk food. Grabs a Twinkie.

KATSE
For all the faults of your race, you certainly know how to kill yourselves with good food. Mmmm.

DR. NAMBU
You’ll never succeed, Katse. You forget one thing about this human race... our ability to stand as one against a common threat.

KATSE
(muffled/chewing)
Just a sec...
(swallows)
(MORE)

KATSE(cont'd)
That’s a sweet thought. But when that human race is pressured by a little thing called GREED, things change.

Katse begins to flip through a crate of old CD’s.

KATSE
It’s funny how a country will act differently when stuck with a trade embargo if they take action against your enemy.

DR. NAMBU
You’re insane.

KATSE
Oh come on! You should be LOVING this! I’m actually acting like a HUMAN! Greed, deception, blatant self-interest...
(finds a CD)
...the human race is the greatest blueprint for villainy. I celebrate its entire collection.

DR. NAMBU
I know all about your plans. I know the legend of Galactor.

Katse walks to a stereo. Fiddles with buttons.

KATSE
Yeah, about that... it’s a shame no one believed you ‘till it was too late. Plight of the brilliant I s’pose.
(thumps the stereo)
I hate these ancient cd players.
(back to Katse)
Y’see, it IS true that I’m the head of Galactor.
(stereo finally opens)
Finally!
(then)
But I’m not just the president... I’m also a client. In fact, my little flesh bag, I’ve been here for eight hundred years. Yeah, I know, I don’t look a day over 300.

Nambu’s eyes widen.

KATSE
What’s with the surprised look? Do you think a mere mortal can bend human history to their will?
(closes in)
(MORE)

KATSE(cont'd)
I'll let you in on a little secret. I'm from out of town.
(closer)
WAY out of town.

DR. NAMBU
That's... impossible.

KATSE
I led the FIRST invasion. Was supposed to be your standard sweep and destroy, but then this little band of bird-faced zealots popped up... and wiped out my entire army.
(sigh)
So what did I do? I took lemons... and I made lemonade. I stood quietly by, while mankind evolved it's technology, it's economy and governments. And I was there every step of the way. Every famine. Every dictatorship. Every war.
(closer - gleeful)
Me!
(beat)
But the problem was that every idiot I was secretly behind turned out to be a LOSER.
(aside)
Except for that guy with the funny moustache. Now THERE was a guy with potential.

TV shows GIANT MECHAS all over the planet. Mass chaos.

KATSE
And now thanks to recent events, no one on this planet DARES to make a move against me... or I'll destroy them.

DR. NAMBU
You're going to destroy the planet?

KATSE
NO! Are you kidding me?! I love it here! Mankind - I'M A HUGE FAN!
(pinches Nambu's cheeks)
You're just all SO... CUTE.
(then)
I'm not going to destroy it... <u>I'm going to rule it. Forever.</u>

DR. NAMBU
They're going to stop you.

KATSE
Didn't we already go over this?
(thinks)
(MORE)

KATSE(cont'd)
OH! You mean your little zit-faced lab rats!

DR. NAMBU
You can torture me all you want, psycho. You’re not getting their location from me.

KATSE
(wide grin)
Where is that? Training in Japan with Master Takeshi?

ON NAMBU - His face falls. How did he know that? Suddenly - WHOOSH - Katse is nose-to-nose with Nambu. Switching gears to evil and SCARY.

ON SHADOWS - Xhang walks out. Ominous.

KATSE
(hushed growl)
I’m... counting on it. They just need a bit more time to bake.

IN BG - The stereo hums to life as we stay on their profile-to-profile position. Suddenly the opening guitar chord for the Who’s “We Won’t Get Fooled Again” CRASHES in. Katse’s eyes light up.

KATSE
(low evil growl)
I LOVE this part!

WIDER - As Katse rears back, fists in the air to scream along with Roger Daltry’s first note.

KATSE
YYEEAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHH!!!!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BAMBOO FOREST - NIGHT

Quiet. CAM PANS ALONG TREES - Stops at one silhouetted tree. A beat. Suddenly... A PAIR OF EYES OPEN from inside the darkness of the shadow. A shape steps toward camera -

- it’s KEN in full ninja gear! He slowly raises a practice katana vertically into frame. He steps out of frame.

Ken reaches into a small gap between fallen trees. Two slices of his practice sword.

ON TREES - Out pop Ryu and Jinpei, both with FLORESCENT SLICE MARKS on them.

RYU
How did you-

KEN
You reek of potato chips.

JINPEI
(still, then crunches)
...he's good.

Ken continues to search. Stops, senses something. Slices UP.

ON BRANCH ABOVE - Jun hangs there like a spider, florescent slice mark on her torso.

JUN
How could you have known I was up here?!

KEN
(thinks, confused)
I, I think I could... hear your heart beating.

Ken continues on the hunt. He stops. Raises his katana to his nose. Closes his eyes. LISTENS... nothing. He opens his eyes -

ON KATANA BLADE - Rack focus to see the reflection of Joe BEHIND him about to strike!

Joe drops a FLASH PELLET that shoots like a camera bulb!

KEN
AAGH!

KEN'S POV - Blurred double vision. Sees a dozen Joe's hiding in the shadows. He swings at every one and every one is MISS.

KEN
You... YOU CHEATED!

JOE
No. I <u>improvised</u>.

Ken holds his sword close. Eyes closed... EARS OPEN. Tries to sense Joe moving. He angles to face him, eyes still closed.

Joe moves behind Ken. He raises his sword, about to attack Ken. As he moves, CAM ZOOMS INSIDE OF JOE'S BODY!

INSIDE JOE'S BODY - Cam zooms through muscular tissue, blood stream, nerve centers to his HAND as it CLENCHES. The sound is DEAFENING... at least to us.

WIDER - Ken hears the tightening of Joe's hand before the attack. He kneels down, blocking the attack above his head!

JOE
Someone cleaned his ears today.

Ken GRINS, then flips backwards into a full-on assault! The two spar through the trees. A little too vicious and a lot too personal. They parry verbal and physical blows.

KEN
Why are you HERE?! You don’t even want to be a part of this! You don’t care about anyone but yourself!

JOE
Well at least I care about SOMETHING!
(they dodge between trees)
And it’s not because some jerkoff with more badges told me to!

Ken tries even harder to hit him. The other three run along side, watching with concern.

RYU
Okay guys, cool yer jets.

JOE
Know what the difference is between a WARRIOR and a SOLDIER?
(lunges)
A soldier does what he’s told. But a warrior?
(dodges)
Does it because he BELIEVES IN IT! One hundred percent!

Ken gets a lucky shot in, flipping Joe onto his back.

KEN
WHY ARE YOU EVEN HERE?!

JOE
BECAUSE I LOST MY FAMILY TOO! KILLED BY GALACTOR, DUMBASS.

Joe springs to his feet and flips the sword out of Ken’s hands. Ken is FURIOUS! He stands there, fuming.

JOE
I was... I was seven. They were killed right in front of me.
(beat)
And one day, one day I’m gonna be finished killing everyone responsible.
(catching his breath)
(MORE)

JOE(cont'd)
You and this little fairy tale are just a free ride to get me there.

TAKESHI (O.S.)
ENOUGH!

ON TAKESHI - He stands there with Shigeo.

TAKESHI
Do you not understand what is at risk? The hope for ALL mankind that you are?

TAKESHI, not getting a response, turns to leave.

TAKESHI
(muttering)
...teenagers.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JAPANESE MOUNTAIN TOPS - DAY

CLOSE ON - Feet slamming down into frame on rock surfaces.

WIDER - The team sprint along the narrow tops of mountains. Jumping gorges, rock sliding and performing in ways they never thought possible.

CLOSE ON - Their faces as they race. Perhaps there is hope after all. Joe runs up beside Ken. Always challenging.

JOE
When are we gonna stop joggin’, sport?

Ken tightens and gives it all he has. He and Ken lead a race that makes the course a lot more dangerous than it has to be.

WIDER - We see the original GORGE looming ahead.

JINPEI
GUYS! I DON’T THINK I CAN MAKE IT!

ON KEN AND JOE - Too full of machismo to care.

ON JINPEI - Doesn’t see a TREE ROOT up ahead. Cam cuts away before we see the result.

WIDER - As Ken and Joe hit the gorge’s edge... THEY JUMP THE ENTIRE WIDTH. Pinwheeling through the air. Almost a majestic moment.

WHAM! - They hit the ground. Portraits of cool. They stand up, catching their breath, showing each other they didn’t back down.

ON OTHER SIDE - Jun and Ryu skid to a stop at the edge.

JINPEI
They’re insane.

RYU
Hell yeah. I’m fat. And fat falls. Hard.

JINPEI
(looks around, realizes)
Where Jinpei?

Jun looks around. Her eyes suddenly go WIDE.

JUN
JINPEI!

ON JINPEI - Unconscious with a bad BREAK in his left leg.

EXT. JAPANESE FOREST CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

The team brings Jinpei back on a mock-stretcher. Takeshi and the others are waiting. Ken is PISSED.

KEN
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?! You think this is all some sort of kung-fu movie?! Some sort of GAME?!

They place Jinpei on the ground. Half-conscious.

KEN
Our city is under siege, I don’t know if Nambu is even alive anymore, and we’ve done nothing but train to fight this war. A war that we’re suddenly not allowed to engage in.
(beat)
WE’RE LEAVING.

Takeshi remains unfazed. He walks past Ken, and kneels next to Jinpei. He examines the leg. Very ceremonial, he MUTTERS a quiet prayer and places his hands on Jinpei’s injured leg.

ON Takeshi - Uplit by the power emanating from his hands. A magical moment. Laying hands. Takeshi is barely exerting himself. The others are amazed.

WIDER - Jinpei stands up. As shocked as the others.

JINPEI
(slightly weakened)
Hey dudes.
(MORE)

JINPEI(cont'd)
Just my opinion, but I, uh, I think we should consider staying...

ON Takeshi - He doesn’t turn to face the group. His face is solemn. As if they’ve disappointed him.

TAKESHI
The power of the Gatchaman is a mysterious thing. Not easily believable, and not easily mastered.
(beat - looks to Ken)
But once it is... you can change the world.

Takeshi walks leaves the group. A disappointed teacher.

The look on Ken’s face says it all. Maybe he doesn’t have all the answers. First hit of humility. It’s time for them to get with the program.

CUT TO:

EXT. JAPANESE FOREST - DAY

SHORT MONTAGE OF TRAINING SHOTS - Led by Ken with renewed determination. The team completing various training exercises. Strength. Agility. Stealth. Takeshi is impressed, but watches from the sidelines. Letting them set their own course.

End with Takeshi joining in, surrounded by all five and competing in a sword fight. They fight hard, but with style and grace. They put up a valiant fight, yet Takeshi takes out all of them until only KEN remains.

Ken performs well. A few fell moves and Ken ends up getting the better of Takeshi. Looks like Ken has won, only his self-assuredness has left him open for failure.

TAKESHI
I believe you are almost ready.

JINPEI
(groaning)
I can’t imagine what it’d feel like if we weren’t.

CUT TO:

EXT. JAPANESE VILLAGE - DAY

The Blood Dream again. Ken fights viciously with the Water Creature. He’s losing. Suddenly his eyes begin to glow RED. He suddenly becomes a vicious animal. In a flurry of attacks, he destroys the monster... becoming one himself.

WIDER - The shredded pieces of the monster float under the water surface. They slowly transform into the dead floating bodies of Jun, Jinpei, Ryu and Joe.

They slowly sink into the darkness below as we-

CUT TO:

INT. HIDDEN VILLAGE OF GATCHAMAN - BUNK ROOM -- NIGHT

Ken wakes up in his cot. Visibly shaken. He’s all alone.

CUT TO:

INT. HIDDEN VILLAGE OF GATCHAMAN - LATER

Joe, Jun, Ryu and Jinpei socialize with the villagers. They’re becoming part of their family now.

JOE
Where’s the boy scout?

JUN
I don’t know. I haven’t seen him.

ON BUDDHA STATUE - High atop the village, we see the small speck of KEN sitting on Buddha’s shoulder, far away from the action. His face is troubled.

TAKESHI (O.S.)
I, too, prefer the view from afar.

Ken doesn’t look up. Keeps on looking at his team.

KEN
(stares, then softly)
I can’t lead them.

ON Takeshi - He knew this was coming. He chooses his words.

TAKESHI
You “can’t” or you “don’t think you can”.

KEN
This dream. It’s telling me something. Joe’s right - I’m a highly trained soldier without an ounce of real world instinct.
(thinks)
How do I know I’ll make the right decision?

TAKESHI
You do not. That is what being a leader is. The defining moment of a man comes in times of doubt. Times of confusion. And sometimes fear.
(closer)
Do not run away from it. Embrace it, and you will become the leader you are destined to be.

ON KEN - He lifts his head. Looks at Takeshi.

KEN
They're all just so good. I wish I could tell them that, but I'm afraid it will compromise my position as their leader.

TAKESHI
You are part of a family, not just a team, Ken. That is the one trait you all share. The power of family is the power of the Gatchaman.
(beat)
Think on this for tomorrow's training. And perhaps you shall leave here before you are as old as I.

Ken grins. Turns back to address Takeshi... only he's gone. He looks down at his team and suddenly brightens.

ON GROUND - Jun is looking up, in midst of playing with a bunch of villager kids. She smiles and waves. Ken waves back.

STRYKER (O.S.)
MOVE! MOVE! MOVE!

CUT TO:

EXT. UTOLAND STREETS - SUNSET

HIGH ANGLE - As a dozen RED IMPULSE SOLDIERS scurry across a bombed street. Sniper fire ricochets all around them. They dive behind an abandoned CITY BUS.

BROCK
It's no use, boss! We're covered from all sides!

STRYKER
We need to take down. that outpost! It's the central nerve system for the southwest quadrant!

BOOM! - Another mortar round blasts above them.

O’LEARY
If y’ask me, this whole “resistance movement” thing is getting hazardous for our health!

Stryker surveys the situation gets an idea.

STRYKER
I need every bit of heavy explosive in this bus, stat!

They toss it all in.

STRYKER
Now PUSH!

They push the bus down the street. Galactor pillboxes open fire. At the last minute they dive off behind overturned cars as the bus careens toward the outpost!

INSIDE OUTPOST - The Galactor Soldiers scream as the bus collides into the base!

...only the explosion doesn’t happen.

GALACTOR SOLDIER
Ha! Idiots!
(beat - looks up)
Oh no.

OFF HIS LOOK - We see Stryker standing up behind a car with a BAZOOKA. He launches a missile, directly into the explosive-laden bus. FWOOOM! Target taken out.

ON STRYKER - Nods to Brock. Looks up to sky.

STRYKER
(to himself)
Where are you?

CUT TO:

INT. TAKESHI’S DOJO - DAY

Candle lit. Takeshi paces while the others kneel. Serious. Takeshi is dressed in ceremonial garb.

TAKESHI
You have learned much during your time here. But like all journeys, ours is coming to an end.
(beat)
Like the mighty Phoenix and the Karura, it is time for you to rise and join the ranks of your ancestors. It is time to BECOME.

Ken stands. Raises his arm. Electric circuitry crawls out of his wrist band, creeping along Ken’s body, completely enveloping it!

Then - WHOOSH - the material on his body begins to TRANSMUTATE into another form. The form of microscopically thin battle armor. The creep moves up his neck over his head, creating a HELMET, with a sharp beak-like visor.

WIDER - He is completely enveloped in white and blue armor. A thin CAPE slides out his back, gently billowing in the breeze. Everyone is silent until-

Each of the team does the same. Cool.

TAKESHI (O.S.)
Ken the Eagle. Jinpei the Swallow. Jun the Swan. Ryu the Owl. Joe the Condor.

ON RYU - He’s fighting his hardest to be optimistic, but can’t help it.

RYU
So... owl, huh? I get it. Is that, like, a fat thing?

ON Takeshi AND SHIGEO - They smile. Their team is ready.

CUT TO:

INT. NAMBU’S OFFICE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON - The shape of Xhang. His head suddenly JOLTS up, as if he just telepathically was told something. He walks over to Katse, slumped in a chair and listening to HIP HOP MUSIC.

He leans down and whispers something in Katse’s ear.

CLOSE ON - Katse’s face, as he slowly breaks into the creepiest Grinch-like grin you’ve ever seen.

KATSE
Time to practice my bird calls.

CUT TO:

EXT. JAPANESE FOREST - NIGHT

CAM BOOMS DOWN from the sky onto the Gatchaman monolith.

ON BASE - Team in their Gatchaman suits. Still looking up. Jinpei breaks formation and walks up to the stone tower. He simply KICKS the stone with his toe. Nothing.

JINPEI
Well, I’m outta ideas.

Cam circles the monument and the team.

TAKESHI (O.S.)
The power of the Gatchaman lies in family. In working together. Five minds and bodies acting as one.

ON KEN - He gets an idea. He walks around the monolith. Slowly the others do the same, creating a CIRCLE around it. They lift their arms into t-poses.

TAKESHI (O.S.)
...as one.

A WIND begins to build. Stronger and stronger, until the team begins to move with it! They’ve just created a TORNADO.

The music builds, as does their movement around the impossibly large stone structure. Their faces wince.

TAKESHI (O.S.)
...as one.

WIDER - BOOM! - The monolith explodes into a million little pieces. The tornado slows as the Gatchaman fall back into position on the ground. A LONG BEAT, until -

JINPEI
That... was... AWESOME.

The team celebrates. Takeshi and Shigeo watch from afar. Takeshi breaks into a rare SMILE.

SHIGEO
The only question that remains is, will they be able to unify in the face of evil?

CUT TO:

INT. CHIMERA SHIP - DAY

The bay door opens, streaming in light in the dark hull. Jinpei and Ryu sneak in, over-the-top spy style.

RYU
Okay little man, we have about ten minutes before anyone notices we’re gone. Our mission? All the junk food we can stuff in our faces, and a seriously INTENSE ten minutes of boob tube.

JINPEI
Already on it, bro.

Jinpei hacks into the system and turns on the power of the ship. They turn on four monitors, all playing different cartoons - anime, Avery-style, Ninja Turtles etc.

JINPEI
Heads up, hoss.

Jin dumps an entire bowl of snack cakes, chips, and candy between them.

RYU
(like a crack addict)
Oh, baby. Daddy missed you. Yes he did. And now, Daddy’s gonna eat you all up - RAAHRRRRHH.

Ryu and Jinpei stuff their faces, laughing at the cartoons.

RYU
(stuffed mouth)
Ifh I have one moh bowl ofh rice, I’m gonnah kill fomeone.

Jinpei changes the channels. Skips over a NEWS BROADCAST.

RYU
Wait! Go back!

ON TV - Shots of Utoland under attack. Galactor forces in full effect.

JINPEI
...dude.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
And as insurgent forces continue to fight, Galactor Occupants, today, issued this warning.

Katse stands in front of the U.N. Delegates.

KATSE
Since no one seems to be taking my threats seriously, perhaps you will take THIS as a sign of my resolve.
(beat)
Until this infighting ceases, I will be executing one member of the United Nations every day. Starting with, oh, let me see... <u>this guy.</u>

ON MONITOR - A photo of DR. NAMBU!

Jinpei and Ryu look at each other. Not good. They bolt out of the Chimera to run back to the village.

CUT TO:

INT. HIDDEN VILLAGE OF GATCHAMAN - LATER

A heated debate is already in mid-progress.

JUN
Ken - you know that Doctor Nambu sent us here to train. To prepare. Leaving now won't solve anything!

Ken is packing his bags.

KEN
I've left him to die once already, Jun. I can't do it a second time.

Jinpei and Ryu watch "mom and dad" argue.

JUN
You are SO PIG HEADED! Just once will you listen to someone else!

JOE
I think she's right, man. As much as I don't care if you go down in flames, it just doesn't seem right to go back now. We need more prep time.

KEN
You're one to talk! What about this whole soldier versus warrior crap?
(beat)
I BELIEVE in this, Joe. Isn't that enough? What more do you need?

ON JOE - He knows Ken is right. Better to live your life fighting for something you believe in than not.

JOE
Okay, soldier boy. You're on.

Joe grabs his bag.

JUN
Oh great, now there's two of them.

JOE
Listen hon, I'm still gonna kill Katse the first chance I get. But I need Dudley Do-right over here to get me there.
(MORE)

JOE(cont'd)
And if he’s dead, that ain’t helpin’ me.
(looks at all of them)
So are you in or out?

WIPE CUT TO:

INT. TAKESHI’S DOJO - LATER

The five kneel in front of Takeshi. Shigeo stands to aside.

KEN
...and that is why we need to return, Master Takeshi. Doctor Nambu is like a father to me... to all of us. And since the power of the Gatchaman comes from family-

JUN
(uncomfortable)
We’ll return to our training after we rescue him. We promise.

ON TAKESHI - Stoic. Not showing his cards. Makes it harder for team.

Ken eventually breaks formation. Stands up and BOWS. The rest of the team does the same.

JUN
(softly)
...sorry.

They all leave the room. Silent.

SHIGEO
(subtitled from Japanese)
But they have not completed their training, Master!

TAKESHI
(subtitled from Japanese)
Or perhaps... now they have.
(beat)
Show them the bunker. They should at the least be given a fighting chance.

SHIGEO
(subtitled from Japanese)
But Master. How will they face the enemy in their present condition?

ON Takeshi - A beat. He thinks. And looks up. Resolved.

TAKESHI
(subtitled from Japanese)
They will not be alone.

CUT TO:

INT. DARKENED CAVE - MOMENTS LATER

BLACK - As doors suddenly PART in front of us. Cold and steel, revealing Shigeo and the four Gatchamen.

They enter a secret high tech elevator. Shigeo leads the way, hits a dozen-keyed security pass code. The doors close and - WHOOOSH! - the car plummets down, seemingly for miles.

ON SHIGEO - Completely calm. Smiling.

INT. SECRET HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

BING! - The car arrives. The doors open, spilling light into a darkened room. Can’t see much, but you can tell it’s BIG.

Shigeo walks to a wall and throws a CIRCUIT BREAKER. KA-CHUNK - Industrial lights switch on overhead.

The floor is glossy, the ceiling high. In the middle is a 757-sized SHAPE - looks more animal than machine. Surrounded by four smaller silhouettes.

With each KACHUNK - the screen splits show close-up TEASES of the high-tech vehicles they are about to receive. Slick. High-tech. High-calibre.

LOW ANGLE PUSH IN - On team. Their jaws open. Shigeo smiles.

JINPEI
Kick...

RYU
...ass.

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

CAM SPEEDS along ocean surface. Whizzing past frame.

ANGLE UP - To reveal the curved Earth. Then, slowly, SHAPES begin to rise over the horizon. Gray. Smoke. Revealing-

- THE SKYLINE OF UTOLAND. Still in mid-battle. Not as concentrated as The Blitz, but just as horrific.

INT. PHOENIX BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Inside the phenomenal ship holds the Gatchaman team and all their individual vehicles. They’re in full Gatchaman uniform.

Jinpei sits to the side, running through lines of code. Finally - success.

JINPEI
I hacked the I.S.O. mainframe guys - Galactor must have hijacked it for internal communication.
(reads)
Looks like they’re transporting Doc now from ISO to the U.N. building. If we hit it, we might be able to catch them en route.

RYU
You got it, bro.

Ryu guns the accelerator. Everyone is thrown back for a beat.

RYU
(to ship)
Easy girl. You’re a strong one, aren’t ya?

Jun sees something troubling on her monitor.

JUN
Whoa.

JOE
What?

Jun doesn’t take her eyes from the holographic radar screen.

JUN
You’ll see.

RYU
Whaddaya mean we-
(off his look)
Oh crud.

OFF RYU’S LOOK - They gather at the bridge to see a SWARM OF HUNDREDS OF GALACTOR AIRSHIPS rocketing toward the ship. They hover as a wall between The Phoenix and Utoland.

A tense standoff.

RYU
Whadda we do, boss?

ON KEN - Time to lead. A beat. Then- THWWW-FOOOM! - a MISSILE fires from the Phoenix and decimates a Galactor Fighter!

KEN
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?!

ON JOE - Sitting at the munitions console. He takes his finger off a FIRE BUTTON.

JOE
I only got one speed, boys.

KEN
Let’s bring it to ‘em!

ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE (you knew it was only a matter of time) - High energy music kicks in as we see The Phoenix vs. hundreds of Galactor aircraft! They fight over the oceans, through the mountain valleys and finally through the high-walled streets of Utoland.

Ken deploys his G1 fighter jet from the rear of the Phoenix to fight alongside his team. They zoom past a blown-out building where Red Impulse fighters are hiding.

BROCK
The hell was THAT?!

STRYKER
(smiling)
It’s what we’ve been waiting for.
(to others)
LET’S MOVE!

ON STREETS - Galactor anti-aircraft mechs begin firing up at the Phoenix. Jun, Jinpei and Joe deploy their ground vehicles - motorcycle, and souped-up dune buggy respectively. They’re having a blast with their toys.

The citizens of Utoland begin to take notice. They cheer the resistance fighters against Galactor. Symbols of hope.

They end up in a DEAD END on the streets of Utoland. Ken finds himself unable to shake a DOZEN Galactor fighters. Ryu can’t get to everyone. The tide turns for the worst, until -

Ken’s pursuers are blown to bits in mid-air! Through the fireball flies a DOZEN RED IMPULSE JETS!

In the city, Jun, Jinpei and Joe are saved by Red Impulse fighters!

SKY ABOVE UTOLAND - Ken sees Stryker’s jet fly up next to him. He looks over.

STRYKER
You okay?

KEN
I am now.
(beat)
We’re looking for Nambu. He’s supposed to be executed within the hour!

STRYKER
We’ll carve a path for you.
(closer)
Be careful.
(to squad)
I want a three by three formation! On my mark!

Red Impulse flies blasts holes in the Galactor defenses.

ON STREETS - Red Impulse escorts the Gatcha vehicles to rendez-vous. Brock looks down to Jinpei.

BROCK
Good to see ya, snot-rocket.
(to squad)
Let’s heat ‘em up!

As Red Impulse provides cover, all the Gatchaman vehicles re-enter the Phoenix.

CUT TO:

INT. GALACTOR CARAVAN - MOMENTS LATER

CAM PULLS BACK - From the Phoenix, showing it to be a green BLIP on a radar screen. Noticed by the soldier manning it.

GALACTOR RADAR SOLDIER
(into radio headset)
My lord. We are being followed. Object approaching from the south-west.

Katse sits in Nambu’s office on a video monitor.

KATSE
Well, it’s about frigging time!

The Radar Soldier suddenly panics, complete mayhem behind him. Red Impulse destroying the Galactor Squad.

GALACTOR RADAR SOLDIER
MY LORD! THEY’RE EVERYWHERE! WE-ACK!

Radar gets shot in the head. Spatters on the video monitor.

KATSE
Eewww.

ON SCREEN - Red Impulse comes to cam, gives the finger.

KATSE
Okay, fine... I'll do it myself.

CUT TO:

EXT. UTOLAND STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The drop bay of the Phoenix opens as FIVE SPECS fall out!

CLOSER - It's the Gatchaman, free-falling at hundreds miles an hour, headed towards the caravan. They hit the sides of buildings, bouncing from side-to-side of the street, as Galactor Ships fire behind them!

JOE
WHEN YOU SAID YOU HAD AN IDEA HOW TO GET HERE FAST... I THOUGHT YOU HAD A DROP SHIP!!

Ken smiles, and nose dives toward the moving caravan.

INT. GALACTOR INCARCERATION TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

They land on the roof and enter the large mobile prison, taking out any soldiers present, throwing most of the window. Ends at a LARGE DOOR.

INT. HOLDING CELL - CONTINUOUS

BOOM! - Jun blows the door off the hinges. They run in.

JUN
DOC!

OFF HER LOOK - Nambu, restrained in his holding chair. Ken runs up, rips off Nambu's gag. Nambu is trying to scream.

DR. NAMBU
IT'S A TRAP!

Suddenly a HISSING noise builds around them. They look for the cause when-

- BOOM! The walls and ceiling of the Incarceration Truck are BLOWN OFF! It flies off into the distance in a single piece.

WIDER - The caravan, now two trucks, continues to rocket through the streets. Only now, we see it flanked by TWO FLATBED APC'S... carrying A HUNDRED BLACK-CLAD BIRD FIGURES!

They are THE BLACKBIRDS - look like bad carbon copies of the Gatchaman... only a helluva lot scarier.

A high speed Battle Royale begins on the trucks. An all-out fight between Gatchaman and the Blackbirds. The only problem is that Gatchaman gets their asses handed to them.

In the melee, Nambu gets knocked off the caravan. Watches them shrink into the distance.

DR. NAMBU
NOOO!!!

ON KEN - He can't help his team. He watches helplessly as each of them are taken down by the Blackbirds. BAM - knocked unconscious. Last thing he sees is XHANG standing over him.

XHANG
I... I'm sorry.

FADE TO BLACK:

KATSE (O.S.)
Wake up sleeeepyhead...

FADE FROM BLACK:

INT. HANGAR - NIGHT

Barely lit large room. Cold and dank. Ken wakes up to find himself restrained to the same chair that Nambu was earlier. His teammates are as well. Suddenly, his chair YANKS up ward, robotically tipping him upright!

He's face to face with KATSE.

KATSE
I've been waiting for you for a long, long time...

WIDER - Katse stands with Xhang and a small army of Blackbirds behind him.

KEN
Who the hell are you?

KATSE
I... am your father.
(beat)
Heh. Just messin' with ya. I'm actually your benefactor.
(MORE)

KATSE(cont'd)
Y’see, when you die, you have all these riches that need bequeathing.

JINPEI
We’re kids, dude. We don’t have any money.

KATSE
OOOH! He’s adorable, isn’t he?
(pinches Jin’s cheeks)
Yes you are... oh, yes you <u>are.</u>

JOE
Psycho.

Joe gives Katse the death glare.

JOE
Personally, I don’t give a crap if you take over the world. Just know, that before this day is through...
(dead serious)
...I’m gonna watch you die.

A long uncomfortable beat.

KATSE
OOOOH! I’M SO A-SCAREDED!
(beat)
Hey kid, any shmuck with a nuke can rule a planet. But to maintain that power? To maintain it... well... you have to become a GOD.

Blackbirds begin connecting the Gatchaman’s chairs.

KATSE
But how can I become a god, you say? I’m glad you asked! Well, by draining your little gang of all your newfound powers.
(smiles)
But you weren’t ready. It took YEARS of planning. CENTURIES of trying to destroy one incarnation after another.

He walks behind Xhang and the Blackbirds.

KATSE
But for every success, there were six failures. So I decided to give these little guys a home. I call them “Blackbirds”... get it?
(knocks on Xhang’s head)
That’s how I followed you. They have the same Blood Dreams that you do.
(MORE)

KATSE(cont'd)
(beat)
Afterall, it takes a Gatchaman to beat a Gatchaman.

Katse returns to face the Gatchaman.

KATSE
And here you are. All freshly trained with that new Gatchaman smell.
(sniffs)
Mmmmm... boy.

KEN
Y-you'll be... stopped...

KATSE
BY WHO?! My greatest enemy just helped me by training you all! In fact, I CREATED YOU. I've been everywhere in your life, slowly grooming you, KNOWING that each of you were the special ones.
(to Joe and Jinpei)
Making sure you never had a family.
(to Ken)
Ensuring that YOU were never good enough. Remember your third grade teacher? THAT WAS ME!
(rears back)
Now do me a favor and DIE.

Katse slams his hands onto Ken's face! The charge runs through Ken's body and to the bodies of his four team mates. They scream as Katse pulls their life-essences and powers from them... The lights pulse and blow out. The room rumbles.

ON XHANG - Stoic, tho looks as if his jaw clenches.

The process ends. Katse drops to his knees. Slumped over. He begins to shake... then he begins to LAUGH.

WIDER - As his laugh continues. THUNDER rolls outside. On a loud CLAP, we-

CUT TO:

EXT. UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Pouring rain. Lightning flashes to reveal FIVE FIGURES hanging by their arms from a statue in front of the U.N.

CLOSER - We see that it is all five Gatchaman... **DEAD.**

CUT TO:

INT. UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS HALLWAYS - LATER

Katse leads the charge down the hall. Head down. Very powerful. Flanked by his Blackbirds.

INT. UNITED NATIONS MAIN COUNCIL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Katse kicks open the doors. The members are still there. They all turn to face him. One runs up to him.

U.N. MEMBER 3
I'll have you know that international law prohib-

KATSE
(low)
Move.

WIDER - As Katse walks down the hallway, dozens of Members are tossed in the air, like a giant forcefield surrounds him.

He reaches the podium. Cameras on. <u>Katse addresses the world.</u>

KATSE
It's funny - a dog sniffs a flower and gets stung by a bee. Does the dog sniff any more flowers after that? Maybe. But if he got stung a second time, you can bet your sweet ass that he's retiring from the flowerbed.

The room rumbles. Curious.

KATSE
Okay, y'know, forget it. I'll just dispense with all the speeches.
(deadpan)
I'm taking over the planet and you'll all do as I say. And if any of you dare to stand in my way... I'll kill you.
(beat - smiles)
Wow. That sounds cool when you say it out loud.

U.N. MEMBER 1
THIS IS RIDICU-HHGHN!

Katse suddenly lunges out his hand, which in turn lifts the UN Member out of his chair! Then - WHAM - Katse throws him hard into the floor. Mush.

KATSE
Do you think I did this all myself? I merely planted the seed on Earth. Gave you the opportunity to band together against a common evil... but all you silly Earthlings ever did was just use those chances to jockey for financial or political power.
(beat - incredulous)
Hell, even IF I stopped now, you'd still end up blowing each other up in a nuclear blaze!

Nothing from the crowd. They're too petrified.

KATSE
(disappointed)
Okay, fine. Maybe this'll help...

Katse pushes a button on his cane as we-

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD - VARIOUS

We see the walking Galactor Mecha transform into their "attack mode" as before. All over the globe. Mass chaos.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

The five bodies of Gatchaman still hang in the rain.

ON KEN - he lowly coughs. Barely alive. He looks at his team. DEAD. He can't do anything to help them. <u>His nightmare has come true.</u>

Slowly, out of the shadows comes a FIGURE. Dressed in a cloak. Walks up to the hanging bodies.

CLOSER - He lifts up his head... <u>it's TAKESHI</u>. He studies them for a moment. Walks over to the tethered chain holding them all up and snaps it with his bare hands.

Team collapses on the ground. Takeshi walks to Joe. Kneels. Does the same "laying hands" motions as when he healed Jinpei's leg earlier. Only this time, it's a much bigger deal...

ON KEN - He watches as Takeshi goes down the line of them, doing the same to each. With each "resurrection", Takeshi seems to wither a little more. <u>He's killing himself, so that Gatchaman may live.</u> Tears stream down Ken's cheeks.

Takeshi finishes with Ken, and then collapses on the ground. Ken crawls over to Takeshi, puts his head on his lap.

TAKESHI
The... secret of... Gatchaman... is... is family.

Ken’s eyes water as the other Gatchaman slowly wake to witness Takeshi’s sacrifice.

TAKESHI
You have... found yours. Now make it... now it is time to lead them.

KEN
But, the Blood Dream. I hurt everyone around me... I... I’m a monster.

TAKESHI
The greatest secret of all... is that you control... the dream. Control it, and you control your destiny.

Takeshi whispers in Ken’s ear. Ken nods... as Takeshi dies.

JINPEI
Is he... is he dead?

Jun places an arm around Jinpei. Ken turns and faces his team. Lowest point for him.

KEN
I’m... I’m sorry. You were right, Joe. I got us killed.

ON JOE - Tough guy melts away for just a moment.

JOE
It ain’t supposed to be easy, Ken. Hard times happen, it’s how you deal with ‘em that counts.

Joe reflects. As if he just told that to himself.

JOE
You just gotta face it, sure, some of your decisions may get us killed.
(closer)
But that’s part of being a leader. Deal with it.
(beat)
Personally, I’d rather you didn’t get us killed, but hey...

ON KEN - a pep talk from his biggest adversary. Hits him hard. He contemplates. Then raises his wrist communicator.

KEN
Attention all ISO personnel within the area.
(beat)
Gatchaman has returned.

INT. HIDDEN BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Nambu clamors out of his sorrow to listen to the radio. Red Impulse gathers around as well.

KEN (O.S.)
We're taking back the city.

NAMBU - Looks at Stryker. "Can you believe it?"

CUT TO:

VARIOUS SHOTS

The rain lets up. Red Impulse takes to the skies. Nambu coordinates attacks from a Hidden Bunker. Gatchaman gears up.

DR. NAMBU (O.S.)
(over radio)
We don't have much time - you need to disable his control on the machines around the globe. We'll provide a distraction so you can get to Katse at the U.N.
(wants to say more)
...good luck.

MUSIC KICKS IN - As we see Red Impulse fighting Galactor to take back the city. Gatchaman sneaks into the UN, scaling the sides of the building.

JINPEI
If he's controlling those mecha around the world, he probably needs to broadcast from the highest point on the building.

CUT TO:

INT. U.N. OFFICE FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Gatchaman slide in a window. Big room surrounded by windows. Quiet and dark.

RYU
Looks like nobody’s home.

They walk across the room and enter an ELEVATOR.

INT. UNITED NATIONS ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Muzak plays as they take the elevator to the highest floor - the original 1972 Gatchaman theme. Jinpei does a little subtle dance as he waits.

INT. U.N. OBSERVATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

DING - the doors open.

ON RYU AND JINPEI - Eyes go wide. Ryu quickly shuts the door.

JOE
What?

KEN
What’s going on.

JINPEI
Those, uh... those...

RYU
Those freaky bird things are out there.
(beat)
And there’s a lot of ‘em.

Everyone looks at each other. What are we gonna do?

DING - Doors open again. But this time THE ELEVATOR IS EMPTY.

ON LOBBY - We see hundreds of BLACKBIRDS crowding around, wondering where the Gatchaman are. Suddenly COLORFUL STREAKS explode out of the elevator!

WIDER - The streaks ricochet into the center of the room, revealing all five GATCHAMAN, fully posed and ready to go.

The look on Xhang’s face - “You’re supposed to be dead!”

KEN
Gatchaman go!

ALL OUT FIGHT - As Gatchaman takes on Blackbirds. Only this time, they work together. They have each other’s backs.

Not only do they use their signature Gatchaman weapons, but the Gatchaman have extra abilities now.

Energy-driven punches. Amazing acrobatics. A mix of classic anime and Gatchaman lore.

Ends with Ken and Xhang going one on one. Ken ends up destroying him, ending with a round-house to Xhang's face, SMASHING his mask/helmet off! Xhang is about to die.

XHANG
(strained)
Katse... Katse is at ISO headquarters. His ship is there. You still have time to stop him.

KEN
Why are you telling me this?

XHANG
Because... we could have been so much more. Heroes. Saviors.
(beat)
We could have been... you.

Xhang dies.

KEN
Jinpei! Get to that transmission device now! We have to go to ISO.

JUN
What's at ISO?

KEN
Katse.

INT. GALACTOR TRANSMISSION BAY - MOMENTS LATER

INTERCUT Jinpei hacking into the system in split-screen with-

EXT. UTOLAND STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Brock leads a charge down a street, pure military style. Like fighting a never-ending outpouring of an ant hill. Galactor forces are unrelenting.

WIDER - A Galactor Mech rumbles into the area. Sets its sights on Red Impulse and begins to CHARGE UP!

BROCK
(into radio)
WHEN IS THAT BACKUP SUPPOSED TO COME?!

SECRET BUNKER - Nambu mans a dozen radios.

ON TV'S - Resistance is building all over the world.

DR. NAMBU
Katse’s global threat will be offline soon. Hang in there.
(looks OC, smiles)
Look to the skies above.

ON BROCK - He looks overhead as - WHOOSH - a fleet of ships soar overhead, attacking GALACTOR!

CLOSER - we see that it’s composed of a dozen DIFFERENT NATIONS. All fighting as one against a common foe.

JINPEI AT U.N.- Almost done his crack.

JINPEI
Almost there, guys!

JUN
Hurry!

KATSE AT ISO - Watches the entire thing unfold on TV screens.

KATSE
Admirable... but <u>stupid</u>.
(beat)
At least they’re predictable.

Katse pulls out his cane to activate another Galactor Mecha... only nothing happens. He hits it again. Nothing.

JINPEI - Leans back. Exhausted. The monitor reads DE-ACTIVATED.

KEN
We just need to get to ISO now.

RYU (O.S.)
Anyone need a lift?

ON RYU - He smiles as THE PHOENIX rises behind him outside.

<u>WE LEAVE SPLIT SCREEN TO BE IN-</u>

INT. NAMBU’S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Katse flips through all the channels. Every one showing the deactivation of Galactor’s Mechas.

KATSE
Nooo... No. No. No. No. NOOO!!!

Katse grabs an antique SWORD and begins to smash everything in the office. He SCREAMS, and that combined with his new god-like powers, smashes every bit of glass around him.

Katse’s head suddenly SNAPS UP. Like a dog hearing.

CUT TO:

INT. I.S.O. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The Gatchaman walk through the front doors.

JUN
Where do we start?

KEN
Stick together. We’ll find him.

JINPEI
...or he’ll find US.

QUICK SHOTS - of Gatchaman scouring the abandoned building, looking for Katse. Can’t find him. As they run, Joe sees a SHAPE MOVE down a hallway. He splits from the group.

INT. I.S.O. CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS

KATSE STANDS AT THE END OF THE ROOM. Joe enters and stops. Seeing red.

KATSE
You’re alive. Nice trick.
(looks around)
Where’s your team?

JOE
This is between us.

Katse smirks. With a flick of his wrist, Joe is forced up in the air, and tossed across the room. Katse does it 3 more times for good measure. Joe doesn’t give up.

JOE
You hit... you hit like a girl.

BAM! Joe gets a lucky punch in that throws Katse back. Now Katse’s mad. They go at it hard, Katse ending with beating the tar out of Joe.

KATSE
Do you wanna know a secret, Joe?
(beat)
I always liked you best.
(beat)
I could always count on you to feed off that passion. That anger and hatred.
(beat)
(MORE)

KATSE(cont'd)
In fact, you sort of remind me of... ME.

Joe tries another punch, but it’s blocked by Katse.

JOE
Fight me, you asshole.

KATSE
(laughing)
There’s that sauciness again. Your dad was the same way... that is, before I gutted him and played skip rope with his entrails.
(laughs, reminiscing)
Ahh, he was FUN, your dad.

Katse gives him a haymaker that throws him across the room. Joe skids until he hits a pair of BLUE BOOTS.

OFF JOE’S LOOK UP - Ken, Jun, Jinpei and Ryu stand over him.

KEN
I know that we can never take the place of your family.
(beat)
But we’re a team. We fight as one. We die as one.

JOE
Again, I prefer that we don’t get killed.

Ken smirks. Holds out his hand. Beat. Joe accepts.

WIDER - Joe stands up. They are five strong now. Katse is defiant.

KATSE
Persistent little snots, aren’t ya?

KEN
Let’s finish this.

KATSE
OOOH! You sounded just like a grown up! Look at you!

WHOOOM! - Katse throws another energy blast... only this time, the team stops it. They don’t move. Their resolve is strong.

They begin to fight, Katse taking on all five at the same time. Katse is a complete animal. Vicious and unrelenting. An all out battle of strength and magical power. They’re at an impasse.

JUN
He’s not cracking!

JOE
Remember training!

KEN
The cyclone!

WIDER - The team position themselves around Katse. They begin their Tornado Move. Katse is ENVELOPED in their cyclone!

CLOSE ON - Ken, as they spin around. Reveals what Takeshi whispered to him as he was dying.

TAKESHI (O.S.)
And just as a Gatchaman can impart his power... he can take it back as well...

ON KATSE - As he screams, blue energy draining from his body and face.

The Tornado stops. The team is exhausted. Katse is wobbly. Joe composes himself and walks up to him.

KATSE
Did I... ever tell you about your mother?

WHAM! - Joe plows him in the face, sending Katse sailing across the room!

KATSE
Is that all you got?
(cracks neck)
We’re just getting started.

Katse strikes a power pose. Ready for round two. Twirls up his cane and... RUNS AWAY.

JINPEI
Okay... didn’t see that one coming.

CUT TO:

INT. I.S.O. HANGAR - MOMENTS LATER

HIGH ANGLE - As Katse runs toward a LARGE SHIP.

EXT. I.S.O. HEADQUARTERS - MOMENTS LATER

Katse’s ship blasts out of the roof of the hangar, climbing into orbit. His ship is like a large mechanical multi-tentacled creature.

INT. I.S.O. CAFETERIA - MOMENTS LATER

The team feels the rumbling of Katse’s ship. Jun runs to the window.

JUN
He’s trying to escape!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. KATSE’S SHIP BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Katse pilots the ship. He banks over to Utoland and looks out of the window to Utoland below.

ON UTOLAND - Galactor metal insignia being torn down. Galactor troops being corralled. Explosions. Galactor Occupation is on its way out. Not by the hand of a city or nation... but by a WORLD.

ON KATSE - His jaw clenches. He starts to tremble. Then-

KATSE
HUNDREDS OF YEARS OF PLANNING FOR THIS?! ARE YOU KIDDING ME?! THIS IS MY PLANET! YOU DON’T EVEN CARE ABOUT IT ENOUGH TO FIGHT FOR IT YOURSELVES!! AAAAGGGH!!!!!

Katse starts pounding the control panels. He starts ripping at his own face, tearing off his cowl, revealing his truly f’ed up appearance. He’s a MANIAC. He hits one lever by mistake.

SHIP BRIDGE (V.O.)
Reserve fuel tank emptied.

OUTSIDE - Thousands of gallons of fuel drop from his ship.

ON STREETS - Everyone briefly stops as they feel the droplets of fuel mist falling on them.

BACK INSIDE SHIP - Katse moves to stop the dump. Then STOPS.

ON KATSE’S FACE - His eyes dart. Thinking wild thoughts.

KATSE
...yeah... oh yeah...
(starts to laugh)
HAHAHAHAAA!!!
(eyes crazy)
If I can’t have it...

VIEW OUTSIDE WINDOW - He sees the United Nations gleaming in the center of the city.

KATSE (O.S.)
...THEN NO ONE WILL!!

Katse pulls back on the controls, pitching the ship directly into the sky above.

WIDER - He’s climbing directly above the UN buildings, dumping his fuel tanks the entire time.

CUT TO:

INT. PHOENIX BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

They see his direct ascension.

KEN
Where the hell is he going?

Jinpei jumps on his computer. Brings up schematics of Katse’s ship from the Phoenix’s diagnostic scan.

JINPEI
His mainline isn’t going to hold much longer.
(looks closer)
Oh boy.

KEN
What is it?

ON MONITOR - Schematic shows a quickly lowering percentage of fuel in Katse’s reserves.

JINPEI
He’s got enough fuel for only a couple of minutes.

Joe pushes to the front.

JOE
Unless he’s not planning on going anywhere...

ON KEN - Time to act.

KEN
Ryu - swing around and charge him. Jinpei - find a soft spot. Joe - you’re on munitions... do what you do.

INT. GALACTOR COMMUNICATIONS VEHICLE - CONTINUOUS

POV VIDEO CAMERA - Fuzzes in. Nambu stands in front of it.

DR. NAMBU
People of the world. I’m broadcasting to you live from Utoland. Formerly the heart of Galactor Occupation.
(moves cam to ext.)
But things have taken a turn here. Here in Utoland, our people have said “no more” to the forces of fear. Of hate. Of oppression.
(angles on a crowd taking down a mecha)
We cannot be defeated by that which we do not fear.

AROUND WORLD - See people seeing the message, translated in many tongues. His message resonates in any language.

DR. NAMBU (O.S.)
I speak to you not as a member of the United Nations, nor as a citizen of Utoland. I speak to you as a fellow member of the human race.
(closer)
This is OUR planet. Those are YOUR streets... It is time to take them back.

Joe launches a volley of missiles at Katse’s rising ship. They impact it’s thick exterior. Nothing.

KEN
GIVE IT ALL YOU GOT!

ON PHOENIX - A huge arsenal of every missile and shell is expelled. They hit Katse’s ship and ENGULF it in fire.

INT. KATSE’S SHIP - CONTINUOUS

The mayhem of explosions is cancelled out as Katse listens to classical music. Tranquil, even. He lightly mimes directing the invisible orchestra. He’s absolutely lost it.

INT. PHOENIX BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

ON GATCHAMAN - Helpless in front of the bay windows.

KEN
How much time till he drops?

JINPEI
Um, I think...

Behind them, KATSE’S SHIP SUDDENLY DROPS OUT OF ORBIT!

JINPEI
...right about now.

WIDER - the ship begins to fall back toward Earth... UTOLAND!

RYU
Buckle up!

Ryu dives the Phoenix. Racing past the falling Katse Ship.

CUT TO:

EXT. UTOLAND STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The streets are reclaimed. Everyone suddenly stops and looks UP in the sky. They begin to point.

NAMBU exits into the street, wondering what’s happening. His smile slowly fades as he looks up.

DR. NAMBU
Mother of God.

EXT. UTOLAND SKIES - CONTINUOUS

Stryker shoots down two Galactor Bugs. He looks off into the distance. His face falls as well.

OFF HIS LOOK - In the sky, Katse’s Ship is plummeting toward the city. The Phoenix spiraling next to it, engines blazing.

INT. PHOENIX BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Nambu comes in on the radio.

DR. NAMBU (O.S.)
What the hell is going on?

JOE
Well, you want the good news or the bad news?

DR. NAMBU (O.S.)
I want the bottom line.

KEN
Bottom line is Katse’s ship is falling in a trajectory... headed straight for Utoland.
(more serious)
You have to evacuate the city!

DR. NAMBU (O.S.)
We’ll never be able to get enough people out of here. You have to divert it.

KEN
We can’t! It’s impenetrable!

Silence. A long silence.

DR. NAMBU (O.S.)
(quiet)
Then millions will die.

The group is broken. Don’t know what to do. Silence. Then-

KEN
(quiet)
Five acting as one.

Everyone stops and looks at Ken.

JUN
Are you serious?

KEN
We have to finish our training.
(looks around)
Five as one.
(beat)
You saw what we can do. This is what we were meant to be. What to become.

JINPEI
Dead?

EXT. UTOLAND STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Nambu watches as the Phoenix peels away from Katse’s Ship.

DR. NAMBU
What are they doing?

INT. PHOENIX BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Joe is the first to sit in his chair.

JOE
Well, it was good having a family... even if it was only for a couple of weeks.

The others strap in as well.

RYU
Hold onto yer tighty-whiteys.

Ryu circles back to the city, using the straightaway to gain speed. Faster... faster still. They pass the speed of sound.

ON TEAM – They're using all of their energies to make this work. The altimeter on the Phoenix breaks. They've past the high end of the ship itself.

PUSH IN on their faces as we see we’re in-

EXT. JAPANESE VILLAGE - BLOOD DREAM

Etherial. The same Blood Dream haunting them all along. Start on the Black Samurai POV from Ken’s dream. CAM MOVES AROUND, expecting to see Ken’s face... only we don’t.

CAM KEEPS RISING - We see the FIVE ORIGINAL GATCHAMAN rising from water. Leader kills the Black Samurai. In the end, we see that the Five Original have now become our present day Heroes.

Ken has chosen his destiny.

SUCK CUT TO:

EXT. UTOLAND SKIES - CONTINUOUS

The Fiery Phoenix kicks into overdrive.

KEN
(trying not to pass out)
EVERYONE!... HOLD OONNNN!!

OUTSIDE – Slowly, sparks begin to ping off Phoenix’s nose.

ON CITY – The Mecha is falling closer. People prepare for the worst. All is eerily quiet as they await their doom.

NAMBU - closes his eyes, not wanting to look.

STRYKER - Watches helpless.

ON STREETS - Then... slowly... a rumbling shakes cars and wiggles lampposts. A dust cloud rolls down the street when -

UTOLAND CITIZEN
LOOK!

ON END OF STREET – Suddenly blasting down the street is THE FIERY PHOENIX! The ship is encased in the middle of a Phoenix-shaped fire ball. It rips down the street, setting treetops ablaze, setting off car alarms and slicing glass buildings!

It pulls up.. up, headed straight for the Mecha...

PUSH IN ON KATSE'S BRIDGE WINDOW - The last thing we see is Katse hunched over the console. Giving the Phoenix the finger and grinning like a maniac.

FWOOOOOM!!! Phoenix collides with the Mecha and decimates it!

STRYKER
NOOOOOO!!!!

Large chunks of ash floating down on the city below. Utoland is saved!! The crowd cheer.

...but there isn't a sign of Phoenix. Nambu looks up, searching for his kids. Nothing.

DR. NAMBU
(soft)
...no.

UTOLAND KID
(looks, then)
NO WAY!!

OFF KID'S POINT - the Phoenix (not on fire) rockets the main street! Does a victory circle, then blasts into the horizon.

INT. PHOENIX BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The team is exhausted – drained of all their energy used up in the Fiery Phoenix maneuver.

RYU
I... I could... use a sandwich.

They smile. Ken shakes Joe's hand. Heroes. Champions. A team.

A family.

CUT TO:

EXT. UTOLAND SKYLINE - DAY

A bright new day for Utoland, and the first of many in its brighter future. Reconstruction has already begun.

ANGLE ON - The U.N. Building. In its front quarters is a MONUMENT erected, showing stone replicas of the Gatchaman team. Heroic. Saviors.

ON BASE - A dated inscription reads "*In our darkest hour, they were light. Our spirit and freedom will never be broken.*"

JINPEI (O.S.)
A simple "thank you" would have worked for me.

WIDER - We see Jinpei and Ryu in their civilian clothes at the base of it, looking up at their stone counterparts.

RYU
I think we're famous, little dude.

JINPEI
(re: statues)
THEY'RE famous... we're just punks in jeans and t-shirts.

RYU
Wouldn't have it any other way.

They reach out and slap five.

ON JUN AND JOE - They walk along the grass. Ken is the last to arrive.

KEN
You need to do more I.S.O. debriefs at thirteen-hundred hours. Should be back in training by fourteen-hundred.

Long beat.

JOE
You just don't quit, do you?

KEN
You sticking around?

JOE
(beat)
Someone’s gotta keep the stick outta yer butt.

Ken smirks. He looks up at the statue, then to the left.

ON ROAD - A large FULL SECURITY U.N. CARAVAN pulls up and stops by the statue. US security detail hop out and open the limousine doors. DR. NAMBU steps out. Cool suit.

JINPEI
Whoa! Look who’s got new threads!

DR. NAMBU
Thought I’d stop by on the way to work.

KEN
How’s that going?

DR. NAMBU
(gestures to U.N.)
Well, I’m finally getting to show the world how things COULD be if we decided to embrace the potential of mankind. With Katse properly incarcerated, we’re getting a good shot at it.

JOE
What about any other crazies out there? What about the next whack-job who decides they don’t like the way we live.

DR. NAMBU
(thinks, then grin)
Well... when the world needs Gatchaman again... I’m sure I’ll be able to get a hold of them.

He gets in his limo and drives up to the UN. Ken looks back at the statue. Then at Jun.

JUN
You gonna be all right?

KEN
Yeah. For the first time, I think I will be.

Jun notices the bag at Ken’s feet.

JUN
You going someplace?

KEN
(killing him to tell her)
I, uh, I wish I...
(looks for the words)
I have to go. This whole thing has just created more questions for me.
(beat as others gather)
I mean, are there other Gatchaman? Blackbirds? If we survived that crash, is there any way that Katse could have?
(beat, then)
I need to find out what happened to my father.

JOE
Then go. You can't chase bad guys when you're chasing demons. Trust me. I know.

Joe and Ken shake hands. Ken sees Jinpei sheds a tear.

KEN
Hey don't worry. I'll always be here when you need me. We're Gatchaman, right?

JINPEI
(sniffs)
You better bring me back somethin' cool.

Follow Ken as he walks away, backpack slung over his shoulder much like Joe at head of film.

RYU (O.S.)
They made me look fat in this statue.

JOE (O.S.)
Your FAT makes you look fat.

JINPEI
Nice one.

CLOSE ON KEN - He smiles. Puts on sunglasses and walks off into the sunset, as we BOOM UP over beautiful Utoland and-

FADE OUT:

THE END